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ABSTRACT

The Young People and Community Space Project documents the ways in which young people (aged 12 through 24 years) in New South Wales (Australia) use community space and explores ways in which conflicts in the use of community space can be addressed. Community space, for purposes of the study, includes privately owned places such as shopping centers where young people often congregate. This document upholds that it is important that individuals receive education and training to make them more sensitive to the needs of young people and the issues facing them. Part 1 of this report summarizes case study from three local government areas into a number of principles and recommendations. Part 2 outlines the consultation process and the issues associated with young people's use of community space. Part 3 examines the academic literature relevant to the use of community space by young people. Findings suggest that community space represents, for many young people, a place to express themselves without close parental or adult control at little or no cost. It is important for socializing and relaxation. Young people are more likely to use community space in disadvantaged areas where fewer other facilities are available. Conflicts arise when managers of shopping centers and other community areas think that young people are not making appropriate use of the space. A review of options to improve these problems leads to the suggestion that an approach in which all young people are viewed as legitimate members of the community holds the greatest promise for addressing issues associated with the use young people make of community space. Some specific recommendations are made for local and urban planning. Appendixes contain statistical information on the case study areas, a list of those consulted, and the interview questions. (Contains 6 tables and 45 references.) (SLD)

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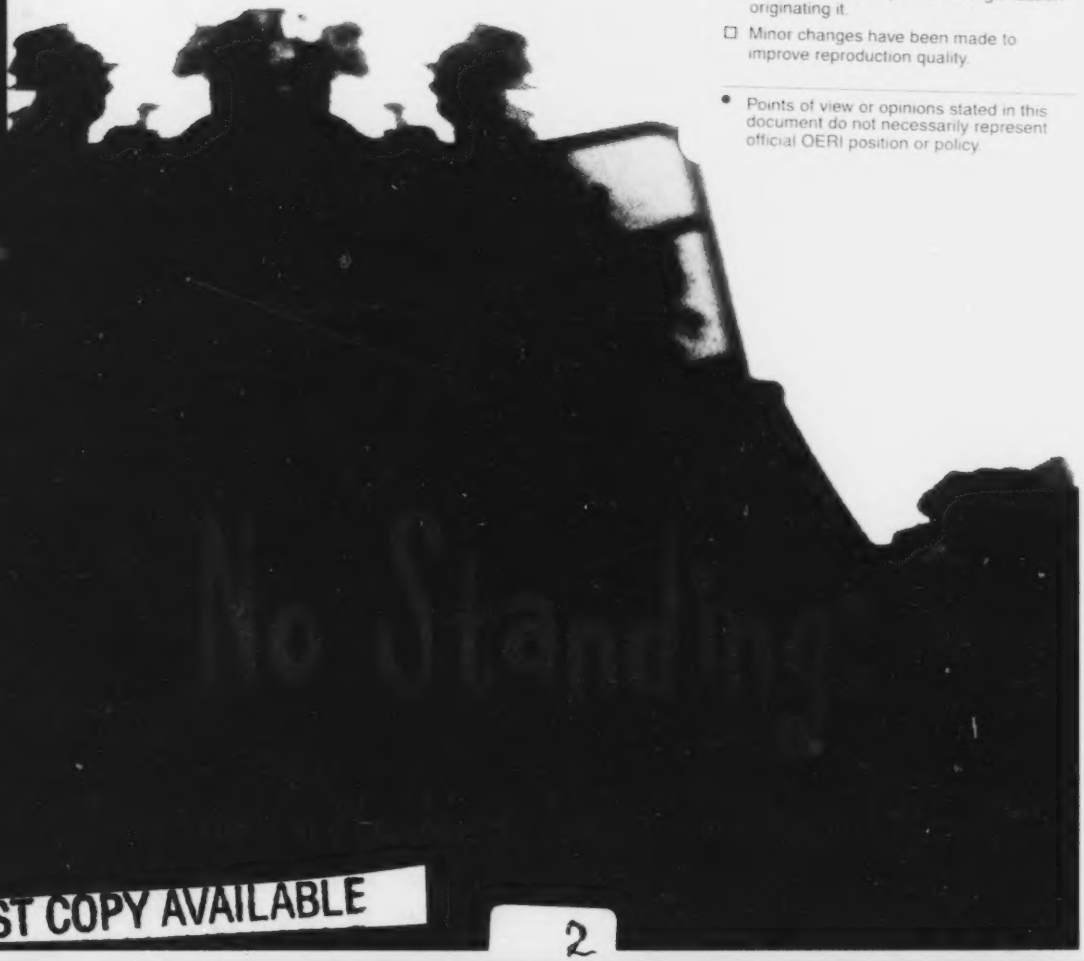

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No Standing:

Young People and Community Space Project Research Report

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Executive summary

1.1 About the Young People and Community Space Project

Various issues pertaining to young people and their use of community space have arisen in a number of ways in the work of the Youth Action and Policy Association (YAPA) in recent years. In response to concerns about these issues, particularly concerns about what was perceived to be the overpolicing of young people in their use of community space, YAPA developed the Young People and Community Space Project. The Project aims to document the ways in which young people use community space and to explore positive means by which conflict in the use of community space can be addressed.

The Project has been overseen by a reference group that comprised representatives from YAPA, the Office of Children and Young People (Cabinet Office), the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, the NSW Police Service, Harbourside Shopping Centre, Darling Harbour and the Local Government Community Services Association.

The concept of community space encompasses a range of venues both public and private. However, due to limitations in both time and resources, this research report will only focus on the use of community space by young people, particularly shopping centres within town centres. Similarly, while there may be many avenues for addressing conflict in the use of community space, this research report will focus specifically on exploring the possibilities offered by planning, design and management for alleviating conflict in the use of community space.

The Young People and Community Space Project is comprised of four phases:

Phase 1: Research into the ways young people use community space and responses to this use (Dec 1996 – May 1997);

Phase 2: Collection of examples of best practice in community space design and management across Australia;

Phase 3: Development of local area planning action kits (based on research and findings); and

Phase 4: Various presentations of the kit and training on its use across NSW.

The New South Wales Cabinet Office has provided funding for YAPA to conduct the first phase of this Project.

The main research questions underlying this research report are:

- What constitutes community space and how do young people use it?
- Are time of day, age of young people and other factors (eg cultural background, gender, employment status, socio-economic status) significant? Do patterns emerge? How does this compare with other age groups?
- Are there regional differences and are these themes transferable to other areas? Are the same factors likely to exist in five years time?
- What aspects of young people's use of community space cause problems? Why and with whom? Are these problems likely to lead to conflict?
- How can town planning design best accommodate young people's needs and usage patterns as well as those of other groups?

1.2 The purpose of this report

This research report is divided into three parts. Part one summarises the information that has emerged into a number of principles and recommendations. Part two outlines the results of the consultation process and the issues associated with young people's use of community space. Part three examines academic literature and publications relevant to the issues associated with young people's use of community space.

1.3 The meaning of 'young people'

The artificiality of imposing age limits on what constitutes a 'young person' is acknowledged. However, for convenience, in this research report the definition of 'young persons' contained in section 3(1) of the Youth Advisory Council Act 1989 (NSW) has been adopted. This section defines, 'young persons' as 'persons who are of or over 12 years of age and under 25 years of age.'

1.4 Summary of findings

[1.4.1] The nature of community space

There is a need to go beyond the merely legal notions of ownership of space to a recognition of the social functions that many privately owned places such as shopping centres fulfil. Such areas should be conceived of as 'community space', that is, a space to which the whole community should have access.

[1.4.2] Use of community space by young people

- Community space represents, for many young people, a place to express themselves without close parental or 'adult' control, at little or no cost in commercial or financial terms. It is an important site for socialising or relaxation.
- Amusement parlours, shopping centres, the street, parks/public places, recreation/sporting facilities, home, friends' places, hamburger/food outlets and youth centres are popular places for young people to congregate. Shopping centres feature consistently as desirable places for young people to congregate.
- The time of day or the time of week in which young people utilise community space will vary depending on the nature of the venue and purpose for which it is used. However, in general, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights appear to be periods of high usage.
- Unemployment has considerable implications for the way young people use community space. Lack of money will inhibit access to many commercial venues and may mean that for many young people the streets are one of the few affordable places they can gather and socialise.

- Areas that are economically disadvantaged and where there are high rates of poverty, unemployment and homelessness are likely to have fewer public amenities than areas that are more well off. This may result in young people in these areas spending more time congregating and socialising in community space because there is no where else to go.
- A range of factors such as gender, age, class and ethnicity affect the way young people use community space.
- The safety provided by various types of community space may also feature as a reason why some young people choose to congregate in particular areas. Community space, may for some young people provide respite from violence at home. Shopping centres, in particular, are public and well lit and may, therefore, also provide protection from violence and harassment in public areas.

[1.4.3] Conflict in the use of community space

- One of the reasons for the problematic nature of young people's use of community space stems from the fact that for many young people, the fundamental purpose of the town centre, to consume, is often not the central reason for the use of this space.
- Many shopping centre managers believe that the presence of large groups of young people may dissuade other patrons from consuming what the shopping centre has to offer.
- Despite the fact that fear of crime may bear little relation to personal experience and perceptions of the level of juvenile crime is not borne out by statistics, fear of young people, particularly in relation to their involvement in crime, has a considerable effect on the way young people are treated in the public domain.
- Contrary to popular belief, research indicates that incidents of nuisance, not crime, are the predominant problem in shopping centres and that these incidents stem from a conflict of interest between shoppers, retailers and the young people who use the centres as meeting places.

[1.4.4] Responses to conflict in the use of community space

- Currently the main means by which conflict in the use of community space is addressed is through the use of police and security guards to

control the access to, and behaviour of young people in community space.

- The view of young people as a threat to public order has also resulted in the introduction or proposed introduction of legislation designed predominantly to curb the activities of young people in public areas.

[1.4.5] Limitations in the current means of addressing conflict in the use of community space

- Unless it can be demonstrated that the young people gathering in community space are involved in wrongful activities, then it is questionable whether they should, or indeed could, be moved on without some alternative gathering place being provided. To do so denies young people the right to freedom of association.
- The use of police and security guards to control what is essentially nuisance or anti-social behaviour creates considerable potential for the escalation of what is often initially a minor problem. For this reason, the use of police and private security guards should be avoided, where possible, in favour of other less coercive means of addressing the difficulties associated with the use young people make of community space.
- Moving on young people does not address the reasons for young people congregating in community space.

[1.4.6] Alternatives

- Leaving the problem to be controlled by improved security measures, ignores the moral dimension in which planners, traders and marketing managers have contributed, albeit haphazardly to the development of a town centre in which young people find it hard to avoid being a nuisance.
- Crime prevention and control strategies are essentially problem focussed and are not suitable as the dominant strategy for planning, development or management in relation to young people's use of community space.
- An approach where all young people are viewed as legitimate members of the community , holds the greatest promise, from both moral and pragmatic standpoints, for addressing issues associated with the use young people make of community space.

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[1.4.7] Young people and the planning process

- It appears that very little direct attention is paid by developers, planners and policy makers to the environmental, social needs and activities of young people. There needs to be some recognition that the lack of appropriate places for young people in many town centres inevitably brings them into conflict with other patrons, police and security guards.
- Most shopping centres are not designed to accommodate the activities they attract and, in general, the uses to which young people put shopping centres are given very little consideration until conflict arises. This conflict may be avoided if the needs of young people are taken into account early in the development process.
- It is important that services catering specifically to young people be located within the town centre in order to enable ease of access by young people whose sole means of transportation is often public transport. Similarly, consideration should be given to providing no/low cost facilities for young people.
- There is also a need for local government to devote more resources to intelligent youth work, both in the provision of physical space, subsidies to youth organisations, and youth work practice within local government itself.
- At the centre of any approach to effective use of community space must be a commitment to good communication and coordination between user groups. This commitment is particularly important for young people, who are generally not a powerful group within the community and so, tend often not to be heard.

1.5 Guiding principles

The following guiding principles for addressing the use young people make of community space have emerged from the literature review and consultations conducted earlier in the Project. These principles, if implemented, have the potential to provide more positive and equitable social outcomes for young people and the community in general by ensuring a more inclusive approach to the use of community space.

These principles are by no means comprehensive and are intended to provide a starting point only for discussion and further research. It is hoped

that they might furnish the basis for the development of specific guidelines on community space planning and management for youth workers, shopping centre managers, local government planners etc.

a. Young people are members of the community.

b. Young people have certain basic rights, including the right to associate freely, to enjoy their recreation, and to be free from unnecessary interference in their affairs by authority figures.

c. Young people have a right to access and use community space on the same basis as other members of the community. Commensurate with these rights, young people have an obligation to ensure that their actions do not unduly disrupt the rights that other members of the community also have to use community space.

d. Despite the fact that shopping centres and similar areas are generally privately owned and are designed primarily for commercial purposes, they should be conceived of as community space, due to the variety of community services located in them and the various uses to which they are put beyond that of commercial activity only.

e. The impact of retail developments on surrounding areas must be considered as part of any application for such a development. All aspects of the development including design, location, management strategies, and the services to be provided should facilitate the access of all members of the community, including young people, to these facilities.

f. The needs of young people should be explicitly taken account of as part of the consideration of applications for retail developments. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that adequate social, leisure and recreational services are provided for young people in the shopping centre and its surrounding areas. Particular thought should be given to the affordability of such options for young people with attention being given to the accessibility of public transport and the provision of free and low cost facilities.

g. Planning for shopping centres and similar developments should be integrated with other Council planning mechanisms such as social planning to ensure that the needs of young people are accounted for. Mechanisms to ensure that developers have explored and provided for the needs of young people should be built into the relevant elements of the approval process.

h. Young people should be consulted at all stages in the design, planning and evaluation of centre development or redevelopment. Creative ways of accessing the views of young people and of communicating with young people on their own terms need to be explored and adopted.

i. The adoption of mechanisms designed to discourage the use of community space, such as breaking up groups of young people and moving them on, constitutes a denial of basic rights and does not adequately address the underlying reasons for the use young people make of this space. There is a need for shopping centre managers to accept that young people will often use shopping centres and other retail areas for different purposes to other users and to devise appropriate responses to such use.

j. Positive, inclusive approaches to addressing issues associated with the use young people make of community space should be put in place. The use of surveillance, regulation, and penalty should only be adopted as secondary measures or used in situations where a crime has been committed or the safety of others is at risk.

k. Policy for responding to problems or issues relating to young people should be through a strategy which arises from consultation between centre management, young people, youth service providers, and other relevant parties.

l. Those responsible for planning and managing services developed specifically for young people or likely to be accessed extensively by young people should receive education and training to make them more sensitive to the needs of young people and the issues they face.

m. The ongoing exchange of facilities, expertise and experience between young people, youth service providers, retail managers, planners, police and private security staff can assist in building bridges between stakeholder groups. Opportunities for such exchange, for example, the development of an ongoing reference group at centres, the increased use of police/youth liaison officers, the use of centres for outreach work with youth or the use of youth workers to train security personnel in relation to the issues facing young people, should be maximised.

1.6 Recommendations for further action

This research report has highlighted the need for further action in a number of areas. Following are several suggestions for further action.

[1.6.1] Review of planning process

Consultation around the planning process occurs predominatly at the exhibition phase when there is already a huge commitment to a particular outcome. The technical nature of planning limits some people's access to the planning process. This seems particularly the case for young people. In order to facilitate and encourage broader community participation in this process the public should be educated in basic planning principles and processes. A public education campaign, targeting young people and other stakeholders should be developed. The aim of this campaign would be to encourage broader representation and participation of young people in the planning process.

[1.6.2] Guidelines on the planning process for youth workers

Increasingly a new role is developing for youth and community workers in negotiating with local councils, property developers, shopping centre managers and state governments on community space issues. Many youth services are either unaware of the input they can have into the development process or are uncertain as to how to go about negotiating for the needs of young people with local councils. Many youth services also have little or no contact with the managers of the shopping centres where large number of young people often congregate. A publication which provides youth services with an explanation of the development process, practical advice on how to advocate for the needs of young people as part of this process should be developed. A publication including examples of initiatives where youth service providers have been successful in advocating for better outcomes for young people as part of the development process would be of benefit to many youth service providers.

[1.6.3] Best practice guidelines for planning for young people

It would appear that very little direct attention is paid by planners and policy makers to the environmental activities and needs of young people and that very little research has been conducted into determining exactly what these needs might be. Local government planners might benefit from the information

and guidance that could be provided by a publication which considers best practice in planning for the needs of young people. No publication of this nature appears to be in existence.

In 1981 the Department of Environment and Planning (now the New South Wales Department of Urban Affairs and Planning) produced a publication entitled *Planning With Children in Mind: A Notebook for Local Planners and Policy Makers on Children in the City Environment*. The intention of *Planning with Children in Mind* is to draw attention to the needs of children (persons up to the age of 12 years) in the urban environment in the hope that local planners and policy makers in particular will pursue its implications. This publication is currently being revised. The updated version should be available early in 1997.

[1.6.4] Further research into best practice in shopping centre management

Shopping centre managers are often unaware of alternatives to the use of police and security guards to address conflict arising from the use young people make of community space. There are, however, several examples of successful initiatives undertaken jointly by shopping centre management and youth services that have helped alleviate conflict in the use of community space. A project with the Retail Traders Association and the retail property industry which gathers together these examples and provides practical advice on alternatives to the use of security guards and police in managing conflict is recommended.

[1.6.5] Public education campaign

A public education campaign should be developed to: inform people that young people have a right to use public spaces; explain the reasons why young people congregate in public areas (socialising, attractions provided, outside constraints of school/home, unemployment etc).

[1.6.6] Coordinated State Government strategy

A coordinated State Government strategy is needed to show leadership and bring together the various agencies to address the perceived problems of young people's use of community space. This could involve: Office of Children and Young People (Cabinet Office), the following Government departments: Local Government, Urban Affairs and Planning, Housing, Transport, Police, Attorney General's in consultation with YAPA, retail/property management bodies.

Consultations

2.1 The case study areas

[2.1.1] Choosing the case study areas

Three local government areas were chosen for the case studies: Bankstown, Penrith and Greater Taree. A number of factors were taken into consideration in choosing these areas. Predominant among these were the need to obtain a mix of urban and non-urban areas and to ensure that each area contained at least one major shopping centre. The reference group also felt it was important to choose at least one area that had a significant indigenous population and one area where young people from a variety of cultural backgrounds were represented.

[2.1.2] Description of case study areas

The information in this section is intended to provide a snapshot of the case study areas, particularly in terms of their population of young people. Much of the information provided on the following pages is taken from the Local Area Youth Profiles, produced by the former Office of Youth Affairs in October 1994. The information in the Local Area Youth Profiles is in turn based on the 1991 Population and Housing Census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. While the information gathered as part of the 1996 census will provide a more up to date picture of the demographics of the case study areas, unfortunately, this information is not publicly available as yet.

The following paragraphs give a brief overview of each of the case study areas. A collection of statistical tables containing more detailed statistical information pertaining to each area is attached at Appendix A.

[2.1.3] Overview

Bankstown

The Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA) comprises an area of 77.78[1] square kilometres in the south west of Sydney. The population of Bankstown LGA is 153,942[2], of which 20.5% are aged between 12 and 24 compared to NSW generally. Bankstown has a relatively small indigenous population, but a comparatively large %age of its population of young people were born overseas in non-English speaking countries. The unemployment rate for young people in Bankstown LGA is less than the state average and young people in the area have higher incomes than young people in NSW generally.

Penrith

The Penrith LGA comprises an area of 406.62 square kilometres in outer western Sydney. It has a population of 149,789 of which 21.8% are aged between 12 and 24, higher than NSW as a whole. The indigenous population residing in Penrith LGA is on par with NSW generally. While quite a high %age of young people in Penrith were born overseas, a low proportion of those come from non-English speaking countries. The unemployment rate for young people in Penrith is less than the state average and it appears that young people in Penrith on average have higher annual incomes than young people in NSW generally.

Taree

The Greater Taree LGA is situated on the mid north coast of NSW and comprises 3,752.76 square kilometres. The population of Taree is 40,316, of which 16.5% are aged 12 to 24, less than NSW as a whole. Greater Taree LGA has a larger than average indigenous population, but only a comparatively small proportion of its population were born outside Australia. The %age of its population who are unemployed is greater than the NSW average and the annual individual income earned by its young people is significantly lower than young people in NSW generally.

2.2 The consultation process

[2.2.1] People consulted

The major stakeholders identified in considering the issue of how young people use community space were young people, youth services, shopping centre owners/managers, police and local councils. In each case study area, individuals representing these stakeholder groups were identified by members of the reference group or through YAPA contacts. A list of those individuals consulted as part of this Project is attached (Appendix B).

[2.2.2] Consultation process

Contact with identified individuals was made initially by telephone. This was followed by a letter giving further information on the Project, after which further contact by telephone was made in order to arrange a time for a face to face interview. The questions to be asked in interviews were sent to interviewees a week prior to the time arranged for the interview in order that answers could be prepared in advance. Copies of all questions are attached (Appendix C).

All interviews were conducted face to face by the same YAPA staff member. Each interviewee was informed of the other individuals that were to be consulted in their area. In each case the individual was asked the questions that had been sent to him or her and the responses to the questions were recorded by hand. These responses were later typed up and sent back to those interviewed so that they could check that their responses had been recorded accurately and add further information if necessary. Any additional information provided was added to the final record of the interview.

While the consultation process followed a set format, attendance at interviews was relatively open. Several of those with whom interviews had been arranged invited others that they thought might be able to provide information of relevance to the Project.

[2.2.3] Shortcomings in the consultation process

Limitations in both the time and resources available for this project resulted in the consultation process being less comprehensive than it might have been. Similarly, the schedules of those identified for consultation, meant that in some cases, individuals from whose views the Project may have benefited were not available for interview. It is acknowledged that many more people who may

have had valuable information to contribute to the Project were not identified by the reference group and so were not interviewed.

In some areas it proved very difficult to contact young people for interview. It was assumed that most youth services in the case study areas would run drop in centres or other regular services that would provide a ready group of young people with whom the issues associated with the use young people make of community space could be discussed. This was generally not the case. Ultimately, therefore, there were not as many young people involved in the consultations as the reference group would have liked. Although a group of young people was consulted in Taree, much of the understanding gained of the views of young people on community space has been obtained through youth advocates. For example, in Penrith, while young people were not spoken to directly, significant research had been conducted in the area as to the views of young people on the use of community space. The results of this research were conveyed to the coordinator of this Project.

2.3 Issues arising from consultations

[2.3.1] How young people use community space

There appears to be very little difference between the three case study areas in the way young people use community space. Like other members of the community, young people use retail and commercial areas to shop, as places to consume food and beverages and to access services. However, perhaps more so than other members of the community, young people also use community space as a meeting place, a place to see people and be seen. The popularity of shopping centres and streets as venues for such activities as skating and skateboarding was also mentioned.

The venues in each case study area popular with young people differed depending on the services and facilities available in that area. However, in each area popular venues tended to be public, high traffic areas that provide seating and where inexpensive food or entertainment is available. The local shopping centre featured as a popular meeting place in all three case study areas. Within the centres, the food courts, particularly near low cost easily identifiable fast food outlets, were the most often frequented.

In all three case study areas, the use of community space by young people was related to school hours. Young people were particularly visible

before and after school and during the lunch hour. Late night trading and weekends also proved popular times for young people to congregate.

Bankstown

The railway station, Bankstown Square (shopping centre), and Bankstown Plaza (pedestrian mall) were cited as the most popular meeting places for young people in the Bankstown area. Several local parks and car parks were also regularly frequented.

Bankstown Square Management advised that, according to exit surveys conducted in September 1996, 8.1% of those using the Centre are less than 20 years old while 23.4% are between the ages of 20 and 29. Although it appears that young people use the Centre all of the time, times of heavy use are Thursday nights, Saturdays, and before and after school. Within the Centre, the areas most regularly frequented by young people are McDonald's, City Limits (an area of the shopping centre catering specifically to young people), Time Out and the eatery area.

Penrith

In Penrith, the local shopping centre, Penrith Plaza, features as a popular venue. Also popular are McDonald's, Time Zone (amusement arcade) and the local Police and Community Youth Club.

The Marketing Manager of Penrith Plaza advised that a survey of 1500 people conducted by the Plaza showed that 13% of those using the Plaza are under 20, while 25.5% are between 20 and 29 years of age. Within the Plaza the most popular areas for young people are The Globe eatery, the fashion section and the front garden entrance, which is the main entrance for those on foot and is nearest the train station.

Taree

In Taree, the two local shopping centres, Manning Mall and the Taree Marketplace (newly opened), are both popular with young people. McDonald's, the town's main street, the drop-in centre at St. Vincent de Paul, the beach, the river and the bush surrounding Taree are also considered to be popular areas.

The Manager of Manning Mall in Taree felt that 'a lot' of young people use the Mall but was unable to give an estimate of how many. He considered the most popular areas within the Mall to be the Pizza Hut and Mr Whippy. The Manager of Taree Marketplace felt that, given the Marketplace had only recently opened, it was too early to comment on what use young people might make of it.

[2.3.2] Factors affecting the use of community space by young people

In the course of consultations, a number of factors were mentioned as impacting on the use of community space by young people. These are outlined below.

Unemployment/low incomes

Many of those consulted made a connection between the meagre incomes of many young people and the use they make of community space. The fact that many young people cannot afford to access venues run on a commercial basis was thought to be one of the reasons why they chose to socialise in community space.

Lack of alternative venues

The lack of low cost youth-specific venues was raised a number of times in all three case study areas as a factor having an impact on the use young people make of community space. In Taree, for example, there is no youth centre and no youth-specific services. The lack of alternative venues for skaters and skateboard riders in Taree was identified as one of the major reasons for skating and skateboarding in car parks, shopping centres and footpaths in the town's central business district.

Availability of transportation

The proximity to public transport of shopping centres and other retail areas in the central business district is clearly an important factor in the use young people make of community space. Travel to and from school appears to provide for many young people their only opportunity for social interaction without adult supervision.

In Taree, travel to and from school on weekdays provides the only respite from geographical and social isolation for many young people in the area. Despite the fact that 49% of the population of Taree live outside the Central Business District, no buses are available on weekends (although subsidised public transport is available during school holidays).

[2.3.3] Conflict in the use of community space

In Bankstown, Penrith and Taree, it was clear that the use of community space by young people was seen by some sections of the community as a problem. Police in all three case study areas reported receiving many complaints about young people, although they added that often the behaviour complained of was relatively minor or not as serious as originally presented.

Many of those interviewed commented on the negative perceptions attached to young people. This perception was attributed to a number of factors, although the role the media plays in promoting negative images of young people was one factor that was mentioned in all three areas.

The propensity for young people to loiter and congregate in groups was commonly acknowledged as a cause for concern and intervention. From a practical perspective, the obstruction caused by large groups of young people was seen as a problem. However, a volume of young people in a particular area could in itself be seen as threatening. The potential in such situations for trouble between different groups of young people to arise was also commented upon. In Bankstown and Penrith conflict between young people in community space was seen as relatively commonplace, although this issue was not mentioned in Taree. The territorial nature of some groups of young people in these areas was thought to be at the root of this conflict, although it was considered that conflict could also be racially or culturally motivated or might occur between young people who were at school and those who were unemployed.

The involvement of young people in crime was also a frequently cited reason for complaints about the use young people make of community space. The involvement of young people in shoplifting, vandalism, graffiti and 'anti-social behaviour' warranted particular mention. Fear of crime appeared of more concern in Bankstown and Penrith than in Taree. For example, it was reported that consideration was currently being given to reopening both Bankstown Plaza and High Street Mall (in Penrith) to traffic because of the crime problems associated with this area.

Several youth services, particularly in Penrith and Bankstown, felt that young people would attract attention simply because they were young, although race and dress were mentioned as particular cues for concern and intervention with young people. In many cases the language used by young people (ie swearing) and their behaviour when in public were perceived as a problem. Concern by other members of the community for their physical safety is also an issue associated with the way young people use community space eg. concern about being knocked over by skateboarders or the like.

Consultations suggest that older members of the community are perhaps more fearful of young people than are other community members. Some of the young people spoken to felt that this fear stemmed from the lack of contact between older and younger members of the community, which meant that many

older people did not understand the lives of young people and the difficulties they face, such as high unemployment and low incomes.

It should be pointed out that not all members of the community, or indeed, all traders, view young people as a problem. For example, the management of Taree Mall did not appear to perceive the behaviour of young people as an issue, despite the fact that young people comprise a substantial proportion of the 6000 people using the Mall each day.

[2.3.4] Current means for addressing conflict in the use of community space

Bankstown

In Bankstown, the use of police and security guards, particularly in shopping centres, appears to be the most common approach to addressing conflict. According to the Bankstown Mall Management, approximately 70% of the time spent by security guards in the Mall is spent addressing difficulties involving young people. Security cameras are also used in the Mall. Although regular meetings are held between the management of Bankstown Mall and the Police, Bankstown Council and the local member of Parliament, there has been no involvement with youth services or young people in attempting to address the problems at the Mall.

Youth services in Bankstown expressed concern in relation to interactions between police, security guards and young people. It was reported, for example, that young people are approached by police for no apparent reason. Concern over the potential for such interactions to escalate and result in charges of assault or other 'public order' offences was commented upon.

It was acknowledged that the relationship between local police and youth services was not good. In fact, existing tensions had escalated just prior to the consultation as a result of incidents involving the police taking photographs of young people. This had resulted in a complaint by local youth services to the Ombudsman. Local police advised that, while they occasionally met with youth services, it was generally in response to a specific problem.

Youth services in Bankstown feel they have little contact with non-community based services in the area. Although the Council sometimes attends the local youth interagency, youth services are of the view that Council does not often invite youth services to participate in their planning or other events.

Penrith

Penrith Plaza Management use security guards to manage conflict in the shopping centre. Banning orders varying in length from 3 to 12 months are also used and are imposed jointly by police and security guards. Youth services in Penrith feel that there is some conflict between young people and security guards in the Plaza and that there is some inconsistency in the way young people are treated by security guards in the area. Plaza Management feel they have an effective working relationship with Police and local community groups. One week per year free leasing in the Plaza is offered to community groups or during education week for example.

Penrith Plaza Management appear to have a good relationship with local youth centres. They have provided funding for *Fusion's* Streetwork Project (see 2.4.2) and are also supporting the development of a youth café which will be located outside the Plaza.

Local youth services feel they have an effective working relationship with the local media, Penrith Plaza's Manager and the local Chamber of Commerce. They were less enthusiastic, however, about contact with local police. The police admitted they did not work closely with youth services, although they had more contact with security guards and Penrith Plaza Management, with the Department of Community Services and with Police and Community Youth Clubs.

Taree

Security guards patrol Taree's Manning Mall half a dozen times a day, although they are not based at the Mall. According to the manager of the Mall, there has been no need to participate in programs to address the use young people make of the Mall as their use is not generally a problem. Young people in the area reported that they are sometimes asked to leave the Mall if they look 'suspicious'. Negative interactions with security guards were also reported, although it was acknowledged that sometimes young people could react in a way that antagonised the security guards. At Taree Marketplace, the new shopping centre, security based at the Marketplace has been employed. Although no specific policies on addressing conflict in the use of the Marketplace have been developed as yet, it is proposed that security guards ask people to move on, leave and ban as a last resort.

By all accounts, relations between Manning Mall and local youth and community groups is positive. Community groups and schools apparently use

the Mall regularly and the Mall has donated money towards the building of a skateboard ramp for local youth. The Manager of Taree Marketplace, has advised that he has met with many of the community/service groups in the area and is planning regular displays and performances at the Marketplace, some of which will be organised to attract young people.

[2.3.5] Young people and the planning process

There were significant differences between the three case study areas both in the extent to which issues affecting young people were considered by local councils and the extent to which young people were consulted in relation to issues, particularly planning issues, affecting them.

Bankstown

There is no Youth Development Officer position within Bankstown Council, although the Department of Community Services has provided funding for a Youth Development Officer which is located within the Bankstown Youth Development Service.

Although the Council has advised that it is of the view that young people should be involved in all stages of the planning process, there is no process in place for consultation with young people and existing staff apparently do not possess the skills to undertake such consultation.

The Council does, however, have a Youth Committee. The Committee is resourced by the Mayor's Secretary and has four councillors and 14 community representatives. The committee has an allocation from Council of $25,000 annually. In recent times this money has been spent on organising a regular bus to the beach in the January school holidays, sporting awards and annual scholarships. The Committee has not, in the past, taken an interest in broader policy issues affecting young people.

One of the actions listed as part of Bankstown Council's management plan is the development of a 'Youth Plan', designed to "promote the achievement of individual well-being and recognise the value of young people in Bankstown by encouraging their social and economic participation within the community." The Youth Plan was meant to be completed by September 1996 but has been postponed due to limited staff resources.

Council has advised that it has been working with local community based youth organisations on issues of common concern for some time. Apparently

much work has been done through Council's Community Project Officer in regard to the support and development of community based services for young people.

Penrith

Penrith Council is involved in the local youth interagency and is also involved in individual consultations and forums focusing on specific issues. Council feels it works well with local youth and community agencies with regards to the needs of young people in the area.

Taree

Contact between Greater Taree Council and young people appears relatively limited. Although school captains are sometimes asked to participate in council processes, it was admitted that the formal and bureaucratic nature of Council processes could pose significant barriers to greater participation by young people. Due to a lack of resources, Greater Taree Council does not generally involve itself in planning community space and does not tailor its approaches directly to any target groups as it does not have the resources to do this.

The Council has been running a Youth Council for the last 12 months, which was considered to be the best source for Council to access in regard to youth issues. The Planner employed by Greater Taree Council sometimes participates in the Youth Council. The negative attitude of young people towards the Council was also identified as a barrier to more effective communication between the two groups. Distance was also felt to be a barrier to accessing young people in Taree.

Greater Taree Council, has, however, been involved in planning and financing a skateboard ramp for local youth. It appears that significant consultation between the Council and local young people has taken place in relation to the location and design of the skateboard ramp (see 2.4.1).

2.4 Examples of youth-inclusive approaches to community space

A number of those consulted as part of the Project gave positive examples of what were viewed as positive programs to address issues surrounding the use young people make of community space in the case study areas. Several of these are described below.

[2.4.1] Manning Valley Youth Drop In Centre and skateboard ramp — Taree

Youth Drop In Centre

Manning Valley Youth is a voluntary organisation of young people and adults providing a range of support services to young people in the Manning Valley. The group is not incorporated and has no funding or government support. Manning Valley Youth Organising Committee is made up of 27 people aged 9 to 20 and includes a mix of young men and women from a variety of backgrounds. The adult members do not have voting rights but can participate in the Committee.

The need for a youth drop in centre was identified over four years ago. Various submissions to establish the drop in centre have been put to Taree Council and Taree Family Support, but without success. However, a number of Taree businesses and residents have donated equipment for the proposed centre and have offered to assist in its running. The young people have organised a petition supporting the initiative which to date comprises over 4000 signatures. The State Government has been approached for funding to pay for premises and the wages of a senior youth worker.

Skateboard ramp

Manning Valley Youth has also put forward a proposal for the construction of a skateboard ramp. To date the group has received considerable community support for the provision of the facilities, with local businesses willing to assist financially in its development. Manning Mall Management has donated $1000 and *Hot Tuna* has donated $5000. The Rotary Club of Taree has volunteered to help with fund raising activities and the provision of construction labour and $4000 has been allocated from Council's 1996/97 budget. The design and location of the ramp have been determined by Council in consultation with local youth. Funding for the ramp is yet to be finalised and further contributions from the public are currently being sought.

[2.4.2] Youth Development Café and Streetwork Project — Penrith

Youth Development Café

In mid 1989 a snooker hall on High Street in Penrith, which was popular with young people, was closed due to drug dealing. This left a gap in central recreational opportunities for young people and local youth services began to lobby Council for alternative facilities. Consultative forums held with young

people as part of Youth Week in 1991 and 1992 further highlighted the high demand for recreational facilities which were easily accessible, centrally located and broadly appealing. Young people indicated that they wanted a venue where they could hold regular entertainment events as well as a place to relax, socialise and/or do things like play pool without the need to spend a significant amount of money. The idea of a youth café evolved as a means of providing young people with a social venue of their own and as a way of connecting young people to a range of other services and programs.

Initially South Penrith Youth Centre and *Fusion* took a leading role in trying to establish a central recreational service. However, in 1990, after *Fusion* received funding from the Department of Community Services (DOCS) to be the central recreation and referral agency for the Penrith LGA, *Fusion* began to be seen as the natural agency to set up the central recreational service. Although the need for such a service was recognised by Council in correspondence and a consultant's report in 1992, no action was taken.

Fusion initially focused on Council as a potential provider of a venue for the Café. Public meetings, surveys of young people, meetings with Mayors and councillors, press articles, submissions to Council, the Department of Community Services, the Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme and the Australian Youth Foundation were all part of the campaign to gain support for the proposed service. Ultimately the work that had been done on this campaign formed the basis for a bid for Commonwealth funding. By the time of the by-election for the Federal seat of Lindsay in 1996, there were already letters of support from other services, the local churches were on side, some local businesses were already supporting the proposal, a document outlining the proposal along with supporting research existed, and *Fusion* had already started doing streetwork in the CBD without a venue.

In the end Federal Government funding was forthcoming through the Youth Assistance Scheme (YAS). The YAS funding covers below market rent for the first 3 years, the salary of one full time worker, program expenses and a small amount of the costs associated with fitting out the Café. A team of volunteers to staff the Café has been recruited through the community. Further funding is still being sought.

Streetwork project

In late 1995, *Fusion* proposed that Penrith's Youth Week include a Forum Theatre in the local shopping centre, Penrith Plaza, about young people and

security guards. The Plaza agreed and young people developed a script based on their experiences and performed it as interactive theatre in the Plaza, with the invited crowd and passing shoppers providing suggestions as to how a disastrous ending to the scenario could be avoided.

The experience was the prelude to a meeting with the Plaza about the need for youth work around the CBD. The Plaza responded by offering $10,000 over 12 months to enable *Fusion* to:

- do street work in the CBD;
- do group work with young people contacted through street work;
- work with security guards regarding policies, practices and training; and
- have input into shopping centre policy.

This work is still continuing.

2.5 Summary of Findings

[2.5.1] Community

It is important that young people are treated as part of the community and that a sense of community is fostered in young people. It is important that youth are not made to feel as though they are not able to access various facilities and areas on the same basis as other members of the community.

[2.5.2] Underlying issues

The use of surveillance, security guards and police for addressing the issues associated with the use young people make of community space is often unnecessarily confrontational and can lead to the escalation of existing problems. It is important that greater consideration be given to the reasons for young people using community space, such as unemployment and safety.

[2.5.3] Consultation with/participation of young people

Young people have a wealth of energy and creativity which can be of benefit if it can be tapped in the right way. It is important to ensure that young people participate in all stages of the development process and that creative ways of accessing the views of young people and of communicating with young people on their own terms are explored and adopted.

[2.5.4] Youth-specific space

Due to lack of funds, young people are often not able to access commercial premises to the same extent as other members of the community. It is important that low cost facilities which young people can use for meeting and socialising are provided in areas easily accessed by public transport. The potential financial benefits of providing such facilities need to be made clear to likely providers. For example, the considerable savings in the cost of employing security guards that might be made if young people are provided with an area of their own in which to congregate.

[2.5.5] Education and Training

Those responsible for planning or managing services developed specifically for young people or likely to be accessed extensively by young people should receive education and training to make them more sensitive to the needs of young people and the issues facing them. It is important that such education and training focus on all interest groups not just planners or security guards, if a true shift in policy and practice in the community is to be achieved. Training should also be locally based and cater to the different needs of the different groups being trained and where possible should be included in accredited courses.

[2.5.6] Advocacy

The existence of a strong network to advocate on behalf of young people is essential. In particular, it is important that youth advocates convey the concerns of young people to shopping centre managers and senior council positions in a way that is meaningful for such people. Youth advocates need to strive to put youth issues on the agenda and provide a more effective voice for young people to articulate their needs. The existence of youth/community development officer positions on councils in this regard is particularly important.

[2.5.7] Coordination

Lack of coordination between the different organisations involved in addressing the use young people make of community space emerged as an issue in all three case study areas. Although in some areas various attempts are being made to address the issues associated with the use young people make of community space, these approaches are frequently undertaken in isolation from each other. Particular difficulties appear to attend effective coordination

between local police and youth services. The increased use of police-youth liaison officers could be of assistance in this regard. There is a need for all stakeholders in this issue to work together and to share their facilities, resources, and expertise if positive outcomes for young people are to be achieved.

[2.5.8] Policy development

There is a need to address negative perceptions and attitudes towards young people. It is considered essential that such efforts go hand in hand with the setting of clear policy guidelines on addressing the issues associated with the use young people make of community space. There is a need to not only combat those perceptions of young people that do not accord with reality, but to develop policy guidelines, for example, on how to manage the use young people make of shopping centres.

Endnotes

1. The area of each Local Government Area is taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Estimated Residential Population of Statistical Local Areas of New South Wales, 30 June 1996* (catalogue no. 3210.1).

2. Information as to the origin of all other figures contained in this section are provided in the footnotes to Appendix A.

   Cited in Crane, P. and Heywood, P. *Young People and Major Centres: The Development of Principles for Design, Planning and Management Guidelines in Brisbane City*, Brisbane, Brisbane City Council, 1997: 2

Background

3.1 The Nature of Community Space

[3.1.1] The meaning of 'community space'

The word 'community' is difficult to define, predominantly because it is so overused a term. Any discussion of its meaning is unlikely to result in a neat definition but rather in a set of vague descriptions of what the word implies. As one commentator explains, '...community is essentially a subjective experience, which defies objective definition. It is felt and experienced, rather than measured and defined.'[1] There is no one community, therefore, but many different communities. However, for the purposes of this research report, a very broad, essentially geographical, approach to 'community' has been adopted. Throughout this report, 'community' is used to refer to all the people within a particular locality. 'Community space', therefore, is space which is designated and planned for use by the local community and to which all the members of a particular locality (in theory) have access.

[3.1.2] Community space and public space

Much space to which the community has access is in fact privately owned. White details four broad categories of space, in terms of ownership and access.[2] These are:

- state-owned and open public access (eg. pedestrian malls and courtyards, parks, ovals, beaches);

- state-owned but some restrictions in access and use (eg. sports grounds, some beaches, school yards, showgrounds);
- privately-owned but open public access (eg. shopping centres, malls); and
- privately-owned and exclusive private access (eg. clubs, recreation areas, golf courses).

Throughout this report, the term 'public space' is used to refer to areas that are generally owned by government. 'Private space' is used to refer to property that is owned by private interests. While consideration will be given throughout this report to publicly owned space to which the community has open access, the focus in this report will be on the challenges offered by those areas to which the community has open access but which are privately owned.

[3.1.3] Changes in community space

Prior to World War II, the linear shopping street, which consisted of a street flanked by a continuous row of shops on one or both sides, provided the hub about which the activities of the town centre revolved. While individual shops were clearly private property, shopping was an activity that took place within public space which was open seven days per week, 24 hours per day, available on demand not only for shopping, but also for social functions such as strolling and window shopping outside normal business hours.[3]

Since the end of World War II, there have been a number of new forms of shopping, designed to compete with the traditional linear shopping street, such as:

- enclosed shopping centres and off-street centres;
- vertical retailing and department stores;
- atria and arcades; and
- skyways and subterranean concourses.[4]

Compared to linear street shopping, these alternative shopping forms are undoubtedly very competitive. This is a result of the shopping environment they provide (well lit, undercover, air conditioned), the mix of retail and other services they offer, and their proximity to transportation (generally close to public transport nodes or annexed to major car parking facilities). While in many areas, particularly rural areas, the linear shopping street remains, undoubtedly, the rise of the shopping centre has meant that the linear shopping

street has moved inexorably into decline.[5] In some newer communities, the linear shopping street has never existed.

The popularity of the shopping centre has undoubtedly had considerable impact on the form and function of the town centre. Davis in *City of Quartz* describes this process as the city 'being systematically turned inside out rather than outside in.'[6] It has also been suggested that the development of the private domain of the shopping centre has led to the decimation of the public domain of the shopping street, a phenomenon termed 'urban blight' by some.[7] The decline of the shopping street has had the effect of making the shopping centre more attractive — 'the oasis is all the more appealing because it is surrounded by desert.'[8] One example of the effects of this decimation is the pedestrian shopping mall which, under pressure from shopping complexes, has steadily declined in popularity since its peak in the 1970s and early 1980s, to the point where many are being reopened to traffic.[9]

Despite the obvious retail advantages of shopping centres, it has been suggested that the social price we have paid for convenience is too high. One critic complains that '(f)rom its beginnings as a humble covered street, the mall is now the privatised simulation of main street. And what a poor simulation it is.'[10] Another has claimed that there is 'a psychological and sociological benefit of the local high street that is being sacrificed to these giant shop conglomerates.'[11] Whether we have lost some intangible quality attached to the perhaps mythical village high street, is debatable. What is clear, however, is that the rise of the shopping centre, has meant that increasingly, public space has been lost to private developers. In fact, particularly in central business districts, much of the space to which the community has access is in fact privately owned.

The privatisation of space and its redevelopment into 'mass private property' relocates the power to define and maintain order within these expanded private domains from the state to property developers. Whereas previously the individual shops fronted onto public streets patrolled by the public police, the new facilities front onto private 'streets', often underground, and are often patrolled by private security personnel hired by the corporate owner of the new complex.[12]

[3.1.4] Defining shopping centres as 'community space'

We tend to think of community space as space which is publicly owned. However, as discussed above, much of the space which is extensively accessed by the community is in fact privately owned. There is significant evidence, however, that some parts of the community are less welcome in these areas than others. While this could perhaps be justified if these areas were used only for commercial purposes, many privately owned areas, in addition to serving commercial interests, also have a social function. As well as retail outlets many shopping centres, for example, include post offices, banks, and other services such as Medicare, and are also the sites of community events and performances. In view of the social function these areas fulfil, there is a need to go beyond the merely legal notions of ownership of space to a recognition of such places as 'community space', that is, a space to which the whole community should have access.[13] Some local government authorities, including Leichhardt Council, have already taken steps to acknowledge this, through maintaining ownership over parts of centres, and/or by managing/co-managing elements of centres to ensure certain social and civic functions can occur.[14]

3.2 Use of community space by young people

[3.2.1] Use of community space by young people

According to a study conducted in 1995, which looked at the perceptions of youth and community workers as to the issues facing young people, the activity that young people do most during the day is 'hang out with friends'. Hanging out with friends also rated the most highly for the activity that youth and community workers thought young people did most during the night.[15]

White suggests that for many young people 'hanging out' or 'doing nothing' involves activities such as petty vandalism, fights, the setting of dares and associated risk taking, making noise and minor shoplifting.' He adds that 'in other words, what young people do with their time involves activities which have long been seen as simply a 'normal' part of growing up...(t)he production of 'noise' through listening to music, of a visible identity via dress and language, of 'style' by acting in particular ways, is part of a process of establishing themselves in the world around them.'[16]

In general, community space represents, for many young people, 'a place to express themselves without close parental or 'adult' control, at little or no

cost in commercial or financial terms. It is also a sphere or domain where 'things happen', where there are people to see, and where one can be seen by others.'[17] In short, for many young people community space is an important site for socialising and relaxation.

How particular groups of young people define and use community space — both in terms of territory (eg identifying a particular storefront, park or avenue as being their patch of turf) and with respect to activity (eg a meeting point or simply a point of passage) — is subject to a variety of factors and involves constant negotiation with peers, parents, police, business people and others.[18]

Town centres will always attract large numbers of young people because of the concentration of facilities and services in these areas. Amusement parlours, shopping centres, the street, parks/public places, recreation/sporting facilities, home, friends' places, hamburger/food outlets, and youth centres are all popular places for young people to congregate.[19] For example, young people interviewed in the town centre of Parramatta, a suburb in Sydney's West, indicated Westfield shopping centre (98.3%), the cinemas (45.8%) and the railway and bus stops as the places they 'hang out' at or go to.[20] From consultations conducted by Brumhead et al with young people in an outer-urban housing development, it became clear that the street corner near a small group of local shops and a squash court were favourite places to meet. Apparently this venue provided such opportunities as pin ball machines in the squash court; mild confrontations with passing shoppers; food and drink, and maybe some shoplifting from the milk bar; and the bus shelter for sitting, talking and smoking.[21]

Shopping centres consistently feature as desirable places for young people to congregate. Young people in Hurstville, a suburb in Sydney's South, cited the local Westfield shopping centre as the most desirable meeting place for local youth.[22] The shopping centre is a gathering place that offers social space, food, shopping, even entertainment in an accessible and often pleasant location. These amenities are designed to attract consumers and young people are no exception. The popularity of Westfield, Hurstville, is explained thus:

'Food, entertainment, seating areas and a large number of shops targeting the youth market all contribute to Westfield's popularity. The food court in particular provides the largest café eating area in the Hurstville catchment area and incorporates traditional youth eating places, including McDonald's. In

the absence of competitive social venues for under 18s it is inevitable that Westfield will remain the primary attraction.'[23]

The time of day or the time of week in which young people utilise community space will vary depending on the nature of the venue and the purpose for which it is used. However, common sense suggests that the highest use of community space will occur during those times when young people are most likely to be out socialising with friends ie. Friday and Saturday nights. However, the times during which commercial and retail venues will be used will also be affected by trading hours. Evidence suggests that Thursday nights are also periods of high usage for such venues due to late night trading.[24]

[3.2.2] Factors influencing the use of community space by young people

The literature suggests the following factors have an influence on the way young people use community space.

Youth unemployment

Young people have been particularly hard hit by the effects of the recession and persistently high unemployment rates.[25] The 15-25 age group constitutes approximately 40 % of the nation's total unemployed, and over the last twenty years the proportion of teenagers in full-time work has plummetted from 58.3 % in 1966 to 16.9 % in 1993.[26] It has also been estimated that some 12 % of young people aged 15-19 are not in school or employment, have not completed high school and are not undertaking study or training.[27] Furthermore, it has been estimated that as of February 1995, 20 % of teenagers and 31 % of 20-24 year olds are 'at risk' of being reduced to the margins of the workforce.[28] Recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, released in January 1997, show youth unemployment at the highest it has been in more than two years.[29]

According to the 1991 census, in New South Wales the unemployment rate among 15 to 25 year-olds was higher at 18 % than for the total population (11%).[30] The census also revealed that the unemployment rate was higher among the younger age groups (22 % for 15 to 17 year-olds and 18 to 19 year-olds) than the older age groups (16 % among 20 to 25 year-olds). Of those young people who were employed, most had lower incomes on average than the total population. While 39 % of 15 to 25 year-olds received less than $8000 per annum and 56 % received less than $16000, among the total

populations the proportions in these lower income brackets were lower at 29 % and 48 % respectively.[31]

Unemployment has considerable implications for the way young people use community space. Lack of money will inhibit access to commercial venues and may mean that for many young people streets and shopping centres are some of the few affordable places they can gather and socialise. Increased free time may also mean that more time is spent 'hanging out'. These factors contribute to the increased visibility of young people, with the result that they are more likely to become the object of community concern and a target for the attention of police.

Lack of alternative venues

The extent and nature of local services is also particularly important to consider when examining where young people actually 'hang out'. Areas that are economically disadvantaged and where there are high rates of poverty, unemployment and homelessness are likely to have fewer public amenities than areas that are more well off. This may result in young people in these areas spending more time congregating and socialising in public places because there is nowhere else to go. The availability and accessibility of open air parks, ovals, malls, plazas, and beaches have obvious implications for youth activities. So too, the mix between commercial enterprises such as amusement parlours and shopping complexes and non-commercial locations (such as the street) will affect youth livelihood and 'spare time' behaviour. [32]

Gender

It has been suggested that the focus of young women's recreation has traditionally been the home and that young men, on the other hand, have been traditionally expected to 'go out' for their leisure.[33] Richer asserts that this perception of girls as passive and dwelling mostly indoors and boys as active and taking ownership of outdoor public space for their recreational pursuits 'is fairly common and is one that continues to influence cultural constructs of femininity.'[34] While it might be anticipated that issues of safety may impact more on young women than on young men in relation to their use of community space, Richer comments that '(g)irls don't want to just hang out in their bedrooms and a lot of them don't.'[35]

White submits that gender will have an impact on the way young people use community space.[36] Consultations in the Hurstville area, for example, indicated that in some cases males and females differed in what they viewed

as desirable meeting spots.[37] Yet, while some research has looked at the differences between the way males and females use recreational facilities, very little consideration appears to have been given to explaining the different uses males and females make of community space. Understanding the impact that gender has on community space usage by young people would benefit from further research.

Ethnicity/Aboriginality

Aborigines, newly arrived migrants, refugees, and certain ethnic communities often live in disadvantaged areas and are among those groups in the community that experience the highest unemployment. Youth unemployment among these groups is of particular concern. For these reasons and also because socialising out of doors is an important part of the cultures of some of these young people, Aboriginal and young people from non English speaking backgrounds may use community space to a greater extent than young people from other backgrounds. Ethnicity can accentuate the visibility of young people. The stereotyping of young people from non-English speaking backgrounds as 'gangs' also appears to be common. Again it would seem that little research that looks specifically at the use of community space by these groups has been conducted.

Safety

Young people suffer a significant level of victimisation, often at the hands of other young people.[38]

The *International Crime Victim Survey* 1992 shows that 16-19 year olds are significantly more likely to be victims of crime than any other age group.[39] This is the case for all types of personal crime, including robbery, other theft, sexual incidents and other actual violence. For the 16-19 age group the incidence rates are almost double those of the group with the next highest rate. This data is in line with international experience, especially in the US. The *Crime and Safety Australia Survey*[40] conducted in April 1993 interviewed 52,300 persons aged 15 and over as to crimes which affected them either directly or as owners of household property. This survey also found that those in the 15-24 age group have the highest rate of victimisation.

The safety provided by various types of community space may feature as a reason why some young people choose to congregate in particular areas.[41] Community space may, for some young people, provide respite from violence at home. Shopping centres, in particular, are public and well lit and may, therefore, also provide protection from harassment in public areas.

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As public space gets eaten up by private, the venues available in which young people, particularly poorer young people, can comfortably socialise, are decreasing. Inevitably, the appeal of the shopping centre and the death of the main street will result in more and more young people using shopping complexes as their major venue for socialisation.

3.3 Conflict in the use of community space

Available evidence suggests that there are a variety of reasons why the use young people make of community space is perceived as a problem.

[3.3.1] The use young people make of community space

It has been suggested that one of the reasons for the a problem nature of young people's use of community space stems from the fact that for many young people, the fundamental purpose of the town centre, to consume, is often not the central reason for the use of this space.[42]

While we tend to think of space as neutral, in fact it constitutes one of the 'fundamental material dimensions' of society.[43] Society shapes the way space is constructed and the uses to which it is put. According to Cunneen, 'the divisions of 'public' space and 'private' space are defined by dominant relations;...the very construction of that space occurs within the parameters of social and economic relations; and...space not only embodies dominant legal, social and economic relations, it also structures or reconstitutes those relations.'[44]

A given user's perspective will determine whether a shopping centre, for example, is seen as a trading place or as a social amenity. However, where there are a number of groups within the community competing to use a given space in different ways, it is inevitable that conflict will arise.

It is clear that young people are extensive users of community space. While town centres serve the various needs of many sections of the population, it is clear that the dominant use of town centres, particularly in relation to the shopping centres located within them, is commercial in nature. However, many young people use community space for purposes of their own, primarily socialising, which offends against the social construction of such places as being primarily and solely for the benefit of consumers and businesses. For example, in one shopping centre, young people congregating in the eatery

area was an issue. The eatery area was small so each seat was of high value to the food vendors who needed a constant turnover of customers.[45] Conflict arose because of the use young people made of this area as a place for socialising rather than consuming.

It is apparent, however, that some non-consumers are more acceptable to retailers and the community than others. Phillips and Cochrane suggest, for example, that window shoppers and commuters are tolerated far more readily than vagrants or groups of youths.[46] This suggests that the a problem nature of the use young people make of community space stems from more than simply the fact of their non-consuming.

[3.3.2] The threat posed by young people

Difficulties also attend the fact that the presence of young people is seen as disruptive to the normal course of commerce. The territory occupied by young people, their dress, and the activities and behaviour they exhibit, may be experienced as a threat by some patrons, particularly older members of the community and young mothers.[47] Many shopping centre managers believe that the presence of large groups of young people may dissuade other patrons from consuming what the shopping centre has to offer. However, many young people whose structuring of time involves 'hanging out' in the shopping centre may view their activities as entirely legitimate and probably do not readily appreciate that their presence is seen as threatening by older shoppers.

It is clear that large groups of young people congregating in community space does, in the minds of many, constitute a threat. Clarke and Critcher, suggest a connection between free time and the possibility of 'idleness'. They further link 'idleness' with 'undesirable consequences' and conclude that 'this unstable mixture of 'free time' and 'antisocial' behaviour has been a persistent theme of nineteenth and twentieth century capitalism'.[48] Sercombe suggests Clarke and Critcher's reminder of the adage that 'the devil makes work for idle hands' seems to exercise many adult perceptions of youth.[49]

There is little doubt that many citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, experience considerable fear when walking the streets or conducting their ordinary course of business. In some circumstances this may severely inhibit their use of community space. Often this perceived danger of victimisation attaches to a highly visible segment of the population — youth.

While a number of commentators attest to the negative image attached to Australia's youth, many have suggested that such fear is out of all proportion to the reality of young people. The Victorian Community Council Against Violence, for instance, states that '(t)he image of young people as public nuisances, prone to attacking and harassing the innocent, appears to exert a disproportionate influence in the community.'[50]

It is clear that anxiety is often triggered by the presence of large groups of young people irrespective of their involvement in negative incidents. Young people tend to be highly visible. They dress differently, 'hang out' on the streets or public transport, congregate in groups and are often boisterous or noisy. Yet media coverage of youth culture sometimes makes it difficult for people to distinguish between potentially dangerous situations and over-enthusiastic social behaviour. It is vital that the disabling effects of fear be recognised and addressed.

[3.3.3] The involvement of young people in crime

There is a strong association in the minds of many between young people and crime. O'Connor attests to a public perception that children are responsible for a substantial proportion of crime committed in the community.[51] Children are indeed, overrepresented in crime statistics in Australia. However, in his 1983 study, *Age and Crime*, Mukherjee points out the bias implicit in arrest data for juveniles, arguing that 'as such these cannot serve as indicators of actual juvenile crime rates.'[52] In a recent analysis of reported and cleared crime in Australia, Mukherjee has gone further and concluded that 'contrary to the prevailing wisdom juveniles commit a small proportion of total crimes in Australia'.[53]

A survey conducted for the Bulletin magazine by AGB McNair asked a representative sample of 1,293 electors across Australia to rank 12 issues of 'real concern' in order of perceived importance. Concern about 'violence/crimes' was ranked by 70 % of respondents as an issue of 'real concern', the highest level of endorsement given by respondents to any issue.[54] However, nearly half (46 %) of the 12,900 respondents to a 1995 survey, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in New South Wales, stated that there were no crime or public nuisance problems in their neighbourhood. Moreover, those who said they had a problem were most likely to cite 'housebreaking/burglaries/theft from homes' or 'dangerous/noisy driving' as their principal concern.[55] Weatherburn et al point to this disparity between the consistency with which

crime appears in public opinion surveys as an issue of general public concern and the fact that most people do not express great concern about crime in their neighbourhood as evidence that '(p)ublic concern about crime may be driven more by media representations of it than by actual or anticipated personal experience.'[56]

There is no doubt that the media must bear considerable responsibility for the public's negative perceptions of young people. A 1992 study of media stereotyping of young people conducted by the University of Technology, Sydney, in which a year of clippings from a range of NSW newspapers and magazines were examined, found that '(t)he easiest way for a young person under 21 to get into print in NSW is to commit a crime.'[57]

In some cases, politicians have capitalised on fear of crime, particularly juvenile crime, for political purposes. Law and order, for example, constituted key platforms in the campaigns of both major parties in the lead up to the 1995 New South Wales state election. Both parties promised tougher measures directed at improving law and order. Many of these measures focused on young people.

Shopping centre manager and retailers often perceive young people as being responsible for the majority of crime, particularly shoplifting and vandalism, that occurs on retail premises. However, a British study which looked at crime and nuisance in two shopping centres goes some way towards dispelling this belief.[58]

Informal discussions with both security officers and shopping centre tenants at the two shopping centres the subject of the study revealed the widespread belief that a large proportion of the young people gathering at the centres were likely to be involved in crime. However, a breakdown of reported incidents by the age of those involved revealed that only a small proportion of all the incidents involving youths were thefts and only a third of all reported thefts involved youths. Most thefts were committed by adults who were not identified by tenants as such a threat. The study found that incidents of nuisance, not crime, were the predominant problem and that these incidents stemmed from a conflict of interest between shoppers, retailers and the young people who were using the centres as meeting places.

Despite that fact that fear of crime may bear little relation to personal experience and perceptions of the level of juvenile crime are not borne out by statistics, fear of young people, particularly in relation to their involvement in

crime, has a considerable effect on the way young people are treated in the public domain.

It would appear that for various reasons, the use young people make of community space is perceived as a problem. Although evidence suggests that in the main, many of the perceptions associated with the use young people make of community space are unfounded, people's choices of where and how to carry out their activities are affected by their beliefs as least as much as they are affected by the reality of the situation.

It is inevitable that in the absence of a homogenous community, some conflict will occur in the use of community space. Such conflict is even more likely in town centres, where the needs of many sections of the population must be accommodated in a relatively small geographic area. The degree of conflict and the form it takes will always have a marked effect on the amenity of town centres and will evoke strong reactions from the community. Although the behaviour and attitudes of certain groups may contribute to conflict, the design and function of town centres will also play an important role in determining the events that occur within them. Understanding these interrelationships is central to developing effective strategies to reduce conflict and maximise productive use of town centres.[59]

3.4 Responses to conflict in the use of community space

The most commonly employed responses to young people's use of community space can be typified as those which:

- discourage young people from using community space;
- actively move unwanted people on;
- increase surveillance;
- design environments so as to enhance safety and lawful behaviour; or
- acknowledge young people as legitimate users of community space.[60]

The strategies most often used to date to address the use young people make of community space have fallen into the first three categories.

As discussed above, much of the conflict associated with the use young people make of community space has to do with perceptions of what constitutes the legitimate use of this space.

According to White, ultimately the 'master' definition of how space will be used will be determined by those who have the power to control the use and passage of people in the particular area in question.[61] In community space areas that are publicly owned, police will be used to maintain definitions of the legitimate use of space determined by 'the public'. In areas of mass private property, the appropriate use of space will be determined by the owners of the property and maintained by private security.

[3.4.1] Controlling the use of *public* space

The policing of public space is legitimised through an appeal to notions of 'public order'. However, while such concepts as public order and disorder are presented as self-evident reality, constructions of what constitutes public order and the policing of that order will always be situated within a specific social, cultural and economic context.[62]

Cunneen asserts that 'public order' is a 'legal fiction' and adds that '(i)n reality the 'public order crisis' is the contestation over the legitimate use of social space.'[63] He suggests that use of social space and time which does not conform to the prevailing ideology of industry and commerce ie 'isolated economic agents going about their lawful business which in practice means going from A to B in the shortest possible time' will be criminalised.

Legislative responses

Notions of what constitutes public order and disorder have been enshrined in such laws as those against loitering[64], offensive behaviour[65], offensive language[66], riot and affray[67], obstructing traffic[68] and violent disorder.[69] The creation of such offences has the effect of criminalising the behaviour of those who use space in an unconventional manner and subjecting them to increased surveillance and control.

Increasingly, young people have come to be seen as a threat to public order and their visibility in public places, particularly when congregating in groups, has become a cause for concern. In New South Wales, recent times have seen the introduction or proposed introduction of several pieces of legislation designed predominantly to curb the activities of young people in public areas.

The Children (Parental Responsibility) Act 1994 (NSW) is an example of such legislation. The Act was introduced in the midst of the lead up to the 1995 election as a means of addressing the incidence of juvenile crime and

the perceived failure of parents and guardians to take responsibility for their children. The most controversial provisions of the Act gave police the power to remove unaccompanied young people under the age of 16 from public places, where they were considered to be 'at risk', or where removing them would reduce the likelihood of a crime being committed. In such cases, police were to remove the young person to their homes or to a 'prescribed place'. The Act has been amended since and is called The Children (Protection and Parental Responsibility) Act 1997. Some of these concerns were taken into consideration when the Act was ammended.

While the Act was welcomed by some as a necessary measure to curb youth crime, significant opposition to the Act came from civil libertarians, the legal profession, and police, among others, who argued that the Act constituted an unnecessary curtailment of the freedoms of young people and would have no effect on levels of crime. The Act was initially trialed in Gosford and Orange. Despite recommendations from an evaluation committee that the Act be abolished, the operation of the Act has recently been extended in rural New South Wales.

New South Wales' proposed Street Safety Bill provides a similar example. At the time significant press coverage was given to this proposal which intended to ensure the safety of the public on the streets. The proposal would give police power to break up groups of three or more people where the police officer has a reasonable suspicion that the group was likely to obstruct, intimidate or harass other people, and to demand names and addresses from suspected gang members.[70]

These proposals have been welcomed by some as introducing a necessary balance between the rights of young people to use public space and the rights of ordinary citizens to be able to go about their lawful business free from intimidation and disruption. However, the measures have also been criticised on a number of grounds, principally that such powers deny young people their rights to freedom of association, that the subjective nature of the powers could be used to harass and would discriminate against particular groups of young people and that the powers constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy.[71]

Operational responses

Young people have, in various ways, been targeted as a group warranting increased surveillance. The primary agents of this increased surveillance have been the police.

According to a recent article in the *Weekend Australian*, the President of the Australian Law Reform Commission is quoted as saying 'Ten kids walking down a city street at night will attract police attention whatever they're doing...Kids together attract police attention like iron filings to a magnet.' and, 'Police target kids to the extent that they feel quite at liberty to walk up and start harassing them.'[72] Indeed, numerous studies across Australia attest to a level of contact between police and young people that is much higher than that between police and other groups in the community. A National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS) survey, for example, showed that young people from a wide range of economic and social backgrounds, and of both sexes, have been stopped by the police on the street. The survey found that of the young people interviewed (in Tasmania, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia), 80 % had been stopped by the police, and of these all but 17 % had been stopped on the street. It was further reported that 25 % had been stopped while in a public building such as a train station, and 23 % in a shopping mall.[73]

Apart from the contact between police and young people which occurs on a day to day basis, there is evidence that police also embark upon specific operations designed to target young people. Quoting from Brisbane's *Courier Mail* of 28 November 1991, O'Connor describes an example of such an operation.

> '...(In) 1991/92 the Queensland Police Service announced an operation to reduce crime. The target of this operation was children. Children 'loitering on footpaths and at milkbars' were to be stopped and questioned and were to have their personal details recorded.'

According to O'Connor, a police spokesman stated 'we are trying to protect property by nipping things in the bud.' He adds that the officer justified the program by stating that 80 % of property crime was committed by juveniles, a claim which is described as 'clearly nonsensical'.[74]

[3.4.2] Controlling the use of *private* space

Within private spaces, such as shopping centres, normal private property rights prevail in which owners exercise rights over users, which may include limiting of periods of public availability, restriction of entry and codes of behaviour and dress. Generally, private security guards are employed to ensure that the rules set by the owners or managers of the shopping centre are adhered to.

Dress and behaviour codes

The exclusiveness of the shopping in shopping centres is commonly promoted by dress and behaviour codes which are much more stringent than that enforced

by society in public places. Los Angeles' 'City Walk' mall, has been described as being 'patrolled to ensure there are no 'boisterous activities', 'sitting on the ground for more than five minutes' or any other 'expressive activity without the prior written permission of the management'.[75] The information brochure for the St. Louis Galleria (in the US) lists the following rules that must be adhered to by those using the shopping centre.

- Visiting the galleria without shirt or shoes.
- Standing, walking, sitting or congregating in such a way as to cause inconvenience to others.
- Possession or consumption of illegal substances.
- Disorderly or disruptive conduct of any nature, including using obscene language/gestures/clothing, running, yelling, fighting, throwing any object, littering, making excessive noise, or anything that may be offensive to others.
- Possession of pets — except Leader Dogs.
- Smoking in the common areas.
- Distributing literature, offering any items for sale, soliciting signatures, conducting surveys, videotaping or photographing without written center management approval.
- Any act that could result in physical harm to person or damage to property.
- Truancy.
- Skateboarding, rollerblading, or bicycling.
- Acts prohibited by federal/state/local law.
- Non-dining use of the Atrium Food Court tables.

Surveillance and security

Owners generally employ private surveillance and enforcement personnel to protect their private interests, which is largely that of promoting the image and economic success of the property. Private property rights of owners ensure that image can be maintained by excluding or removing 'undesirable' people using their own security personnel, without any need to prove intent to commit a crime.[76]

There is very little legislation governing the activities of the private security industry. This may be because the authority of private security derives not so much from exceptional powers as from the ordinary powers and privileges of

private property owners.[77] In some areas, however, the powers exercised by security personnel have been given the status of law. For example, the Southbank Corporation (Amendment) Act, passed by the Queensland Government in December 1995 gives police and security officers discretionary powers to stop people, ask for names and addresses and tell them to leave the site of the Southbank Shopping Complex for 24 hours. Security officers are also allowed to ban a person from returning to the site for ten days. This is an unusual example of the state sanctioning the exercise of discretionary power by private individuals for primarily commercial interests.

Although relations between young people and security guards have not been as comprehensively researched as relations between young people and police, what evidence there is suggests a significant level of contact between young people and security guards.[78]

Exclusion

Research into the exclusion of young people from areas of mass private property indicates that the owners of these properties ask young people to leave their premises and, in more extreme circumstances, assert an entitlement to ban young people from their centres.[79]

Young people in New South Wales who are banned from mass private property such as shopping centres, generally receive a notice which stipulates the duration of time that they are not permitted to re-enter the property. Frequently the banning notice will inform the young person that if he/she does not comply with the conditions set out in the notice then he/she will be subject to prosecution for trespassing under section 4(1) of the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 (NSW). The penalty is five penalty units ($500), if found guilty of such an offence.

[3.4.3] Shortcomings in the current means of addressing conflict in the use of community space

Currently the main means by which conflict in the use of community space is addressed is through the use of surveillance, police and security guards to control the access to and behaviour of young people. Several of the limitations associated with this approach are discussed below.

Denial of basic rights

The United National Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Australia is a signatory, specifies that the rights of the child to freedom of association and

to freedom of peaceful assembly be recognised and restricted only by those laws which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety and order, public health and morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.[80]

The current means by which conflict in the use of community space is addressed are premised on the basis that it is young people who are at fault. The congregation of young people in community space for predominantly social reasons is well documented and to most young people this is probably quite a legitimate use of space. Unless it can be demonstrated that the young people gathering in community space are involved in wrongful activities, then it is questionable whether they should (or indeed could) be moved off without some alternative gathering place being provided. To do so denies young people the right to freedom of association. Where the behaviour of young people is criminal it should not be condoned, but where the problem is one of nuisance only, the use of increased security measures is inappropriate.

The use of police and security guards is unnecessary and may make the situation worse

Relations between police and young people are notoriously strained. It has been suggested that in some cases police contact with young people is vigorous to the point of harassment. In addition, many young people consider that police behaviour towards them is unfair and intrusive because the contact they report often involves verbal abuse, is regularly physically violent, and sometimes results in serious injury and sexual abuse by police.[81]

Many of the charges against young people are in the nature of 'good order' offences. These charges commonly have their origins in the interactions between young people and police on the streets. It is arguable that the greater the contact between police and young people, the greater the possibility that charges against young people arising out of the intervention itself (resist arrest, using obscene language and assaulting police) will be laid. While the New South Wales Police Service appears to have made considerable effort in recent years to improve relations with young people, particularly through the introduction of police-youth liaison officers, where possible, contact between police and young people should be minimised.

Very little research has been conducted into contact between young people and those employed in the private security industry. The research that is available, however, suggests problems similar to those that characterise

relations between young people and police. For example, a significant number of young people in a recent study reported having been assaulted by one or more security guards.[82] The problems associated with contact between young people and security guards may be further complicated by a lack of clarity in relation to the powers available to those working in the private security industry and issues surrounding accountability for misuse of those powers.

It is not suggested that all police officers or security guards behave in an inappropriate way when dealing with young people. Similarly, it is acknowledged that the involvement of police and security guards is entirely appropriate where it has been alleged that a particular young person or group of young people has been involved in the commission of a crime. However, to use police or security guards to control what is essentially nuisance or anti-social behaviour creates considerable potential for the escalation of what is often initially a minor problem. For this reason, the use of police and private security guards should be avoided, where possible, in favour of other less coercive means of addressing the perceived difficulties associated with the use young people make of community space.

The current means of dealing with these issues does nothing to address the underlying reasons for young people congregating in community space

Many of the solutions put forward for dealing with the perceived difficulties associated with the use young people make of community space are based on the exclusion of young people from community space rather their inclusion. Moving on young people does not address the reasons for young people congregating in community space but simply shifts the problem from one venue to another.

[3.4.4] Alternatives

The conclusions of this report are that there are a number of limitations associated with relying on policing as the primary means of addressing conflict in the use of community space. According to Phillips and Cochrane, '(l)eaving the problem...to be controlled by improved security measures, ignores the moral dimension in which planners, traders and marketing managers have contributed, albeit haphazardly, to the development of a town centre in which young people find it hard to avoid being a nuisance. Resolution of the problem at this broader level has wider implications-not least for avoiding friction between police and young people...'[83] Crane and Heywood add that crime prevention

and control strategies whilst having a place in civic governance are essentially problem focussed and are not suitable as the dominant strategy for planning, development or management in relation to young people's use of community space.[84]

Quite apart from the equity issues involved in preventing a section of the community from using community space, discouraging young people from congregating in shopping centres can be impractical. Firstly, alternative venues may not be available, or when they are available, may not be perceived as desirable meeting places. Secondly, shopping centres and pedestrian malls are generally well lit and populated and so are comparatively safe places for young people to congregate. Third, town centres are generally well accessed by public transport, which is for many young people the only form of transport available. Alternative venues for young people located outside the town centre may therefore prove inaccessible. Finally, many retail outlets rely on the 'youth market' and discouraging the culture that produces such a clientele may not be economically prudent.

Many advocate a more balanced approach to addressing the difficulties associated with the use young people make of community space, one which links physical form to social policy and programs. Bell, for example, supports a multi-faceted approach and advocates achieving a balance between the scale of attractors such as entertainment venues which may attract a predominantly youthful clientele, with other uses which generate a cross-section of age groups. Guppy[85], suggests that conflict is most likely to occur when:

- there is inadequate comfortable social space *outside* the enclosed shopping mall;
- complementary social and service facilities are not provided for key demographic groups *within* the town centre;
- the town centre becomes an arena for the expression of pre-existing community tensions, for example racial conflicts;
- external open space does not function well as social space thus allowing for a 'spillover' from retail facilities;
- there is a lack of social venues for young people with limited financial resources;
- there are limited opportunities for a coordinated approach by youth service providers, retail managers, planners and police and private security staff.

Crane and Heywood suggest that an approach where all young people are viewed as legitimate members of the community, holds the greatest promise, from both moral and pragmatic standpoints, for addressing issues associated with the use young people make of community space.[86]

3.5 Young People and the Planning Process

The following pages provide a brief overview of the relevant planning legislation in New South Wales and considers the opportunities offered by the planning process to provide for a more inclusive approach to the use young people make of community space.

[3.5.1] Relevant State legislation

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The legislative base for environmental planning in New South Wales is the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 ('the EPA Act').

The EPA Act governs the consideration and approval of development applications. Section 4 (1) of the Act states that '*development*', in relation to land, means:

a. the erection of a building on that land,

b. the carrying out of a work in, on, over or under that land,

c. the use of that land or of a building or work on that land, and

d. the subdivision of that land.

Except in certain limited circumstances, the approval of development applications (which would include, for example, an application for the building of a shopping centre) is the responsibility of local councils.[87]

When an application is made to develop a particular piece of land, the council must:

1. Give notice to persons who own or occupy the land adjoining that which is the subject of the development application and anyone else whose use or enjoyment of land may be affected by the proposed development;
2. Exhibit a notice on the land to which the development application relates; and
3. Publish notice of the development application in a newspaper circulating in the locality.[88]

Persons may inspect the development application[89] and, if they wish, may make submissions to the consent authority, stating the grounds on which the application is objected to.[90]

By virtue of section 90 (1) of the EPA Act, local councils are required to have regard to a number of matters in considering development applications. Among these are the social effect and the economic effect of that development in the locality, the existing and likely future amenity of the neighbourhood, and the public interest.

A development application will be determined by the granting of consent to the application, either unconditionally or subject to conditions, or the refusing of consent to that application.[91] A condition may be imposed where it relates to any matter referred to in section 90 (1).[92] Local councils may also ask the developer for a contribution, consisting either of the dedication of land free of cost or the payment of a monetary contribution or both.[93] A contribution can only be asked for in situations where the council is satisfied that the development will or is likely to require the provision of or increase the demand for public amenities or public services within the area of the development.

Beyond the bare minimum outlined above, it is up to local councils to determine to what extent they consult with young people or youth organisations in ascertaining that the needs of youth are taken into account in the development process. Similarly, the council determines to what extent and in what manner it considers the factors referred to in Section 90 in determining whether a development application should be approved, what, if any, conditions should be attached to this approval, and the nature of the contributions, if any, to be imposed on the developer.

Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)

The Local Government Act was revised in 1993. The focus of the new Act is less on local councils being accountable to the state government and more about councils being accountable to their local communities. The most powerful way in which communities are able to express their dissatisfaction with their local government representatives is at election time.

Chapter 6 of the Local Government Act 1993 confers on councils their service or non-regulatory functions. Examples of these functions include the provision, management or operation of:

- community services and facilities;
- public health services and facilities;

- cultural, educational and information services and facilities;
- sporting, recreational and entertainment services and facilities;
- environment conservation, protection and improvement services and facilities;
- waste removal, treatment and disposal services and facilities;
- pest eradication and control services and facilities;
- public transport services and facilities;
- energy production, supply and conservation;
- water, sewerage and drainage works and facilities;
- storm water drainage and flood prevention, protection and mitigation services and facilities;
- land and property development;
- housing;
- industry development and assistance; and
- tourism development and assistance

Clearly local councils have considerable powers and responsibilities in the provision of services for their constituents. The extent to which any particular council focuses on the development of social policy in their area will depend to a large extent on the attitudes of those individuals who are elected to councils and who are responsible for determining policy, making decisions on project priorities, and allocating resources.

Section 8 (1) of the Local Government Act 1993 lists the charter of principles that are to guide a council in the carrying out of its functions. Although no civil action can be brought against a council for failing to pursue its charter,[94] it may be expected that these principles will lend some moral weight to an argument that a council is not effectively carrying out its functions. Section 8 (1) has recently been amended to provide that one of the functions of councils is 'to promote and to provide and plan for the needs of children'.[95]

Councils are also now required to include in their annual reports details of activities in relation to services and programs which address the needs of children.[96] While, the word 'children' is not defined in the Act, this term is often used to refer to persons under the age of 12 years. Many young people, however, are in the same position as children, in that they may not be financially independent and often do not have the right to vote on issues which affect the provision of services for them. It is understood that consideration is currently

being given to amending the Act so that councils are required to provide programs and services for young people as well as children.

In 1995, the Minister for Local Government established the Local Government Reform Taskforce. The aim of the Taskforce is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local councils. Three sub-committees of the Taskforce have been established, one of which is intended to examine the role of local government in developing and implementing social policy. This sub-committee has recently produced a social policy framework for the Department of Local Government which identifies relevant issues and assists councils to do more in the area of social policy and planning. One of the elements of the social policy framework concerns encouraging local councils to address youth issues in relation to the use of community space. At this stage, the document is in draft form only. It is anticipated that the framework will be approved during 1997.

[3.5.2] The role of local government

A variety of factors including urban design, retail management, community attitudes, the availability of youth facilities and support services all contribute to the complex relationship of youth to the town centre environment.[97] The way young people relate to each other, their perception of themselves, their understanding of their role in public environments, are crucial to an understanding of the issues involved in the use young people make of community space. These issues need to be considered by all parts of the community and all levels of Government if some of the difficulties associated with the use by young people of community space are to be addressed.

It is clear, however, that local government has perhaps the largest role to play in meeting the challenges associated with the use by young people of community space. This is primarily because the issue is largely a question of space and the allocation of community resources, and local government is the body with primary control over these commodities.

[3.5.3] Planning with young people in mind

It would appear that very little direct attention is paid by planners and policy makers within local government to the environmental activities and needs of young people. There needs to be some recognition that the lack of appropriate territories for young people in many town centres inevitably brings them into conflict with other patrons, police and security guards.

In 1981 the Department of Environment and Planning (now the New South Wales Department of Urban Affairs and Planning) produced a publication entitled *Planning with Children in Mind: A Notebook for Local Planners and Policy Makers on Children in the City Environment*. The publication is intended to relate to the primary school child ie. children up to the age of 12 years. The intention of *Planning with Children in Mind* is to draw attention to the needs of children in the urban environment in the hope that local planners and policy makers in particular will pursue its implications. Embedded throughout the report are ideas and comments on specific aspects of the child's relationship to, or behaviour in, the environment, intended to enable planners and policy makers to determine their own position on these matters and encourage designers to view environmental purpose more clearly with children in mind. The concluding section of the publication identifies and discusses a number of broad objectives which are intended to provide general directions to planners and policy makers in their day to day work. This publication is currently being revised and updated by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. The updated version should be available during 1997.

Young people are extensive users of public space. Local government planners need to be aware of this and plan for spaces where young people can congregate. Too often public spaces are simply the spaces left over between buildings and rarely are they vested in the control or responsibility of a single body. According to Bell,[98] recent work in Canberra shows that at least five Government Acts and as many authorities have a role in the management, design, improvement, maintenance and control of activities in public spaces in the Civic Centre of Canberra. Bell asserts that rarely are these aspects coordinated.

In view of this, local government planners might benefit from the information and guidance that could be provided by a publication which considers the environmental needs of young people, along similar lines to *Planning with Children in Mind*. No publication of this nature relating to young people appears to be in existence.

It is not suggested here that the needs of young people should necessarily take priority over the needs of any other group within a particular community, but simply that the needs of young people in using public space should be considered, along with the needs of other groups, which at present in many cases they are not. Town centres need to be planned and run with

the needs of all members of the local community in mind, not only those who are most powerful or most vocal.

[3.5.4] New developments

It is clear that shopping centres and similar developments often provide a venue for young people to congregate and socialise. Yet most shopping centres are not designed to accommodate the activities they attract and in general, the uses to which young people put shopping centres are given very little consideration until conflict arises. It is suggested that this conflict can be avoided to some extent if the needs of young people in relation to relevant new development are taken into account early in the development process.

Local government youth workers

While most metropolitan councils employ youth workers, this is not the case in rural areas where often very few services exist for young people. There is a need for Local Government to devote more resources to youth work, both in the provision of physical space, subsidies to youth organisations, and youth work practice within local government itself.[99]

Provision of services and facilities

It is important that services catering specifically to young people be located within the town centre in order to enable ease of access by young people whose sole means of transportation is often public transport.

According to Sercombe, 'local governments need to encourage, by their policies, the development of commercial and non-commercial facilities for youth — amusement centres, youth centres, malls, coffee shops, dry bars at hotels, concerts and music events, venues'.[100]

It is not enough simply to provide more facilities for young people if these facilities are such that young people cannot afford to access them. Particularly in the current climate of increasing youth unemployment, this can leave young people with very little option but to congregate in community space.

It is inevitable that many such facilities will, on occasion, experience difficulties and that pressure may be exerted on local council to close such services. Where possible, the urge to close such services down at the first hint of trouble should be avoided.

3.6 Case studies

A number of initiatives have been undertaken throughout Australia which acknowledge young people as legitimate users of community space and attempt to incorporate the needs of young people into the planning, design and management of this space.

[3.6.1] New development projects

Development of Grace Bros site, Broadway, Sydney, New South Wales

In April 1995, Broadway Australia submitted to Leichhardt Council a $150 million development application for the old Grace Bros. Department store site at Broadway, an area just outside the Sydney CBD and between two universities. The proposed plans included a supermarket, discount department store and six-screen cinema complex, as well as a food court, a leisure/entertainment centre and specialty shops. In the process of considering the development application, the Council undertook a process of community consultation, which involved consultation with youth service providers in the area. As a result, the Council's Community Services Department produced a detailed report outlining a number of recommendations. In relation to young people, the report recommended:

- the formation of a Youth Advisory Committee comprising Council's youth worker, a representative of Leichhardt Youth Network, the coordinator of Glebe Youth Centre, the youth liaison officer from Glebe Police and the Developer/Centre's Management representatives;
- consultation with the Youth Advisory Committee regarding the development throughout the design, building and eventual operation of the complex;
- the employment of a full-time Youth Services Coordinator, fully funded by the centre management and provided with an office;
- the provision by centre management of an annual youth activities budget of $10,000 (indexed to CPI) to fund youth activities developed by the Youth Services Coordinator;
- the employment of a full time youth worker, fully funded by centre management;
- provision for a youth space near the proposed family entertainment area;

- development of a youth policy by the Youth Advisory Committee in consultation with Centre Management prior to the Centre's opening, so that its recommendations can be implemented from the start;
- that sale of alcohol within the family games facility to take place only in enclosed strictly defined areas which have a café atmosphere;
- provision of at least 25% of the area of the family entertainment/ interactive games centre with low cost or no cost activities such as coin machine games, ping pong, videos, exhibition space, and comfortable space and informal seating for conversations;
- a single donation of $100,000 to support youth facilities in the immediate area and an annual donation of $10,000 be provided to support youth facilities and services; and
- that complimentary and concessional passes be available for low income young people from the local area to access businesses in the complex, comprising the gym, sports, cinema and entertainment facilities; and
- that Centre Management explore and develop employment training opportunities and traineeships for young people in the complex.

The developers made a letter of offer which agreed to comply with most of the recommendations for community facilities which had been requested and in September 1995, the development application was approved. The original proposal has since been amended with some loss of public space being the major change. In order to compensate for this, the proposed auditorium which was to have free public access will now be owned by the Council under stratum title. The dimensions will be enlarged to a size suitable for an indoor basketball/ netball court. It is planned that the development be completed and open to the public by Easter 1988.

[3.6.2] Shopping Centre management

Midland Gate Shopping Centre, Perth, Western Australia

In 1989 the Midland Gate Shopping Centre Management were experiencing difficulties with large numbers of young people using the shopping centre inappropriately.

The young people gathered in large groups in the shopping centre to socialise on a regular basis as it was the only place locally to meet and enjoy themselves without money. At these times behaviour such as fighting, damage

to property, abuse of shoppers, high spirited games and illegal recreational drug use constituted continuing problems to management, shoppers and security in the shopping centre.

The initial response was to increase the number of security guards, which resulted in games of cat and mouse, between young people and security guards. Shopping trade increasingly suffered, particularly on Thursday evening and Saturdays.

The manager approached the only Midland youth organisation at the time, the North East Regional Youth Council, with the idea of collaborating to seek a solution.

A committee of local representatives was formed with members from the shopping centre management, Family and Children's Services, the local youth service; the local council, local businesses, the Youth Access Centre, police and community groups. A survey was conducted to assess the problem and it was decided that a youth worker should be employed in the Centre. Family and Community Services were approached for funding, on the understanding that half the costs would be paid by the shopping centre.

The youth worker position is now well established. It appears that incidences of inappropriate behaviour in the shopping centre markedly reduced as a result of this approach and feedback from the community, management and young people has been positive. Initially, regular surveys were conducted to assess the changes felt by the community and users of the shopping centre, with overwhelmingly favourable results. Break-ins to cars were significantly reduced, as was evidence of drug taking. Young people's presence when drunk or high was reduced, and they became less of a problem to themselves and others.

Young people now have regular contact with a concerned adult who is able to listen and respond appropriately to their problems in an informal and confidential manner. Relations between young people, the shopping centre and the community have improved and the Streetwork Program has extended its range to include the railway station and the centre of Midland.

[3.6.3] Major Centre projects

Young People and the Town Centre Project, Hurstville, New South Wales
The Young People and the Town Centre Project was established in response to concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour involving young people in

Hurstville's town centre. In 1993, the owners of the local shopping complex, Westfield, provided a grant to the local council to employ a consultant to work with a Steering Committee comprising police, Council, youth service providers, young people, Westfield management and retailers, in examining the conflicting needs of users of the town centre. As part of the investigation:

- workshops were held with young people at two high schools and a vacation program to find out their needs;
- interviews were conducted with Council community workers and town planners, the local police; shopping centre management; the shopping centre security firm; the local network of youth workers, and the retailers association;
- street interviews were conducted with young people in the CBD on Thursday night and Saturday;
- a display of work from the workshops was put in the local leagues club and shopping centre;
- an interim report was circulated to all participating groups including the Chamber of Commerce;
- two Young People and the Town Centre strategic planning forums were held; and
- a presentation with recommendations was given to Hurstville City Council, the Local Government Youth Workers Association, the local youth service network, the local migrant service network.

The outcomes of this research were detailed in a report made to Council in which a number of recommendations were made.[101] The report of the study recommended:

- that the Council undertake the development of an integrated Town Centre Strategy that links the social and cultural amenity of the town centre to its economic development. Such a strategy should take as its point of departure the fundamental importance of the town centre as a focus for community life and actively seek to promote this function for all sections of the community not least young people;
- that a Town Centre Committee be established (including representation from young people), the purpose of such a committee being to respond to issues facing the town centre, identify and discuss opportunities for creative resolution of problems, provide direction and support for the

youth and the town centre coordinator, and to act as a consultative committee for Council staff on matters relating to the social and cultural amenity of the town centre, particularly in relation to young people;

- that the Council support the employment of a youth and town centre coordinator based in the town centre precinct;
- that the Council support the development of a coordinated Youth Program; and
- that the council allocate funds towards the provision of a multi-purpose youth facility in the town centre precinct.

Council subsequently resolved to implement a number of these recommendations. Of major importance was the establishment of a community-based committee which involved key stakeholders in the community, including police, service clubs, the three St. George councils, business community, youth services and young people. The Committee, then called the Hurstville Town Centre Committee (now the Focus on St. George Committee) was subsequently established with the inaugural meeting held in April 1994. Council was also successful in obtaining a grant of $65,000 which was used to employ a Youth and Town Centre Coordinator for 12 months and to develop programmes and strategies to meet the aims of Council using the principles of integrated local area planning. The Coordinator position ended in February 1996, although the committee continues to be resourced by the youth worker at Hurstville Council.

Streetz Working Party, Parramatta CBD Public Space Research Project, Parramatta, New South Wales

In 1993, Parramatta City Council conducted a survey into the needs and issues affecting young people in the Parramatta Central Business District. From the survey it became clear that the Parramatta CBD attracts vast numbers of young people due to the nature of facilities and services that are in the CBD. Despite this, young people were of the view that the CBD did not service their needs. Many young people also feared harassment or the possibility of being a victim of assault, particularly at the hands of other young people.

The Working Party was formed in early 1994 by a group of local professionals working with young people, interested in addressing the lack of appropriate public space for young people in the Parramatta CBD.

The Working Party felt that further research was needed into many of the issues raised in the earlier survey and so put together a proposal for a qualitative

research project, to be conducted in consultation with young people and other stakeholders in public space. The Project has been funded by the New South Wales Attorney General's Department (Juvenile Crime Prevention Division) and has the following objectives:

1. To identify the needs and expectations of stakeholders in the provision of public space;
2. To develop a collaborative intersectoral model that addresses crime, violence and vandalism within the CBD area;
3. To identify harmonious alternative methods of utilising public space, that are of little or no cost to consumers;
4. To identify predisposing factors to crime, violence and vandalism in public space by examining attitudes, beliefs and concerns of stakeholders; and
5. To establish links between research findings and the development of public space and policies for use.

The Project is due to be completed during 1997.

Young People and Major Centre Planning Guidelines Project, Brisbane, Queensland

This project was commissioned by the Brisbane City Council from funding received from the Queensland Government Young People and Public Space Initiative (Department of Families, Youth and Community Care). This study will inform the development of the Centres Policy within the new Town Plan being developed by the Council. The aim of the Centres Policy is to guide the development or extension of major commercial and service centres such as regional and sub-regional shopping centres and city malls.

Outcomes for the project in general terms are:

- a safer, more welcoming environment for centre users, including young people and their families;
- enhanced economic and social relevance of major centres for young people;
- systematic change of planning approvals and public space design to address the needs of young people in major centre, including relevant amendments to the Town Plan; and
- improved awareness of young people's needs and behaviour patterns in the management of centres.

Specific outcomes from the study will be principles and guidelines for the planning, design and management of major centres in respect of their usage by young people, with specific reference to publicly accessed, privately owned/managed centres.

A discussion paper was released in February 1997.[102] It is expected that consultation on the issues raised in the discussion paper will add detail to the introductory document and will assist in the production of a final report. The final report was presented to Brisbane City Council by the end of May 1997.

Endnotes

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4. *Ibid*: 35

5. 'The *NSW Real Estate Values*, released by the Valuer-General in October, found the worst performance in 1994-95 came from strip shopping. Of the 46 key retail locations samples, only one, Chatswood, and a few rural centres, had shown any growth in rents or values since the recession. And more than 800 corner shops have gone to the wall in the past two years.' *The Sydney Morning Herald*. 22 November, 1995: 15

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9. *The Telegraph Mirror*, 6 December 1995 attests to the closure or mooted closure of at least four pedestrian malls in Western Sydney: Penrith, Fairfield, Blacktown and Bankstown.

10. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. 13 May 1996

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47. Morey, *Whose Space Is It Anyway?*: 98
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Conclusion

Young people do not appear to have access to the use of community space on the same basis as other members of the community. Indeed, the extensive use young people make of community space, their visibility, their behaviour and style of dress, in conjunction with negative public perceptions of young people, ensure that many young people are subject to considerable surveillance and harassment.

It is inevitable that some conflict will occur in the use of community space as different groups in the community assert their entitlement to the use of a particular area in accordance with their own interests. Although it may not be possible in every case, for the interests of all sections of the community to be met, it is imperative that conflicts in the use of community space are addressed with some measure of understanding of the needs and rights of all users, not simply those who are most vocal or most powerful.

Appendix A

Statistical information on case study areas

Table 1 Young people living in case study areas and NSW, 1991

	Bankstown	Penrith	Greater Taree	NSW
Total population[1]	153,9421	149,789	40,316	5,732,074
Total young people aged 12-24	31,561	32,697	6,665	1,128,771
Young People aged 12-24 as % of total population	20.5%	21.8%	16.5%	19.7%

Source: Office of Youth Affairs Local Area Youth Profile — Bankstown, Penrith and Greater Taree Local Government Areas.

Table 2 Indigenous people living in case study areas and NSW, 1991

	Bankstown	Penrith	Greater Taree	NSW
Total population of indigenous people in LGA[2]	817	1736	811	70,069
Indigenous people as % of total population in LGA	0.5%	1.2%	2.0%	1.2%
Total population of indigenous people aged 15-24 in LGA[3]	179	364	154	14,726
Indigenous people aged 15-24 as % of total population in LGA	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%

Source: Office of Youth Affairs Local Area Youth Profile — Bankstown, Penrith and Greater Taree Local Government Areas

Table 3 Birthplace of young people aged 15–24, living in case study areas and NSW, 1991

	Bankstown	Penrith	Greater Taree	NSW
Australian born: Indigenous	0.7%	1.5%	3.2%	1.7%
Australian born: Non-indigenous	75.1%	81.7%	92.1%	79.2%
Overseas born: English-speaking countries	3.0%	7.7%	2.1%	5.3%
Overseas born: Non-English-speaking countries	19.3%	7.0%	1.0%	11.4%
Not stated	1.9%	2.1%	1.6%	2.4%

Source: Office of Youth Affairs Local Area Youth Profile — Bankstown, Penrith and Greater Taree Local Government Areas

Table 4 Attendance at educational institutions by young people aged 12–24 living in case study areas and NSW, 1991

	Bankstown	Penrith	Greater Taree	NSW
% of young people aged 12-24 attending an educational institution	59.2	53.8	59.0	58.3
% of young people aged 12-24 attending secondary school	35.5	36.6	45.2	35.8

Source: Office of Youth Affairs Local Area Youth Profile — Bankstown, Penrith and Greater Taree Local Government Areas

Table 5 Unemployment rate of young people aged 15–24 living in case study areas and NSW, by age and gender, 1991

	Bankstown			Penrith			Greater Taree			NSW		
	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot
15-19 yrs	20.0	17.7	18.9	22.3	21.7	22.0	29.2	24.3	26.8	22.4	21.1	21.8
20-24 yrs	17.9	12.9	15.6	16.3	12.1	14.4	30.7	22.9	27.3	17.9	14.3	16.2
25 yrs and older	12.1	10.2	11.3	7.9	7.8	7.8	15.9	10.6	13.8	10.1	8.4	9.4
15-24 yrs	18.7	14.8	16.9	18.6	16.1	17.5	30.1	23.6	27.1	19.5	16.8	18.3

Source: Office of Youth Affairs Local Area Youth Profile — Bankstown, Penrith and Greater Taree Local Government Areas

Table 6 Annual individual income of young people, aged 15–24 living in case study areas and NSW, 1991

	Bankstown	Penrith	Greater Taree	NSW
% of 15-24 year olds with an annual income of $12,000 or less	46.8	45.2	59.3	49.6
% of 15-24 year olds with an annual income of $20,000 or less	65.5	64.6	77.8	67.4

Source: Office of Youth Affairs Local Area Youth Profile — Bankstown, Penrith and Greater Taree Local Government Areas

Notes

1. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Estimated Residential Population of Statistical Local Areas of New South Wales, 30 June 1996* (catalogue no. 3210.1), the estimated residential populations of the three case study areas at 30 June 1996 were: Bankstown, 163,650; Penrith 168,450 and Greater Taree, 44,660. The estimated residential population of New South Wales at 30 June 1996 was 6,190,200. Intercensal estimates of resident population are based on the estimated resident population at the date of the previous census (in this case, at the 1991 Census) and available measures of change in resident populations since that date. As no direct measure of population movement at the statistical local area level is available, the indicators used may give an incomplete picture of such movement. Therefore it should be noted that all intercensal estimates will be subject to revision when final figures are available from the processing of the 1996 Census.

2. Indigenous people are those people who identified themselves as being Aboriginal or as Torres Strait Islanders. They include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were born here and overseas.

3. In this and following tables, ages 15 to 24 are sometimes presented where the Census data is only available in this age grouping.

Appendix B

List of those consulted

Taree

John Hackney, Centre Manager, Manning Mall
Graham Gardner, Town Planner, Greater Taree Council
Mave Richardson, Community Services Manager, Greater Taree Council
Sen. Const.Steve Hatchwell, Police and Community Youth Clubs, Police Service
Taree Youth Advisory Council
Mathew Bowyer, Centre Manager, Taree Marketplace

Penrith

Penrith Youth Interagency
Eric Weller, Social Planner, Penrith Council
Sen. Const. Linda Turner, Youth Liaison Officer, Penrith Police
Sup. Ken Sheather, Patrol Commander, Penrith Police
Claire Torkington, Marketing Manager, Penrith Plaza

Bankstown

Bankstown Youth Interagency
Linda Livingston, Policy Analyst Social Planning, Bankstown Council
Edward Saulig, Policy Analyst Town Planning, Bankstown Council
Simone Plummer, Policy Analyst Environmental Planning, Bankstown Council
Rose Ward, Centre Manager, Bankstown Square
Tony Taylor, Property Manager, Bankstown Square
Insp. Terry Seary, Bankstown Police
Insp. Paul Smith, Intelligence Unit, Bankstown Police.

Interview questions

Police

1. What areas in your patrol do young people congregate in?
2. Are there certain times of the day or days of the week that young people use these areas more regularly?
3. When do police receive most complaints about young people's use of these areas?
4. How does the use young people make of these areas compare with other age groups?
5. What impact does the use young people make of these areas have on other groups in the community?
6. How do police interact with young people in these areas?
7. What is the current relationship between young people and police in your area?
8. Is there a negative perception of young people in this area. What role do police have in addressing this?
9. Do the police have regular contact with young people in shopping centres? What is the nature of the contact?
10. What other organisations do your work with in dealing with these issues?
11. Have the police ever participated in any programs to address the problems related to the use young people make of public spaces? Is, what strategies worked?
12. What do you see as important strategies that need to be developed to address these issues? What should the role of the police be?

Shopping centre staff

1. What percentage of your clientele is young people (ie. aged 12-24)?
2. How regularly do young people use the Centre? Are there particular times that young people use the Centre more regularly?
3. Are there particular areas in the Centre that are commonly used by young people? How does this relate to other Centre users?
4. Is there conflict associated with the use young people make of the Centre? If so, what is the nature of the conflict?
5. Does your Centre have specific policies on dealing with conflict involving young people? How is conflict addressed and is this satisfactory?
6. To what extent and in what circumstances do you deal with security guards and police?
7. Has the Centre ever participated in any programs to address the use young people make of the Centre? If so, what worked and what did not work?
8. Does the Centre have a working relationship with any other local organisations?
9. Has the Centre ever worked with young people in addressing their needs and interests in the Centre?
10. What support do shopping centres require to address these issues ie. staff skills, programs and resources?

Young people

1. Where do you and your friends meet and socialise?
2. Are there particular times of the day or days of the week that you meet more regularly?
3. Why are these places good places at which to meet and socialise?
4. Do you feel safe meeting at these places? Please explain?
5. Are you ever approached by police and security guards? If so, what happens and how often does this happen?
6. Why do you think other people in the community are sometimes threatened by young people in public and have a negative perception about young people in groups?
7. Are there other spaces or facilities that young people would like to have available to them in your area? What are they and why would they be good?

8. How often do you use shopping centres and why do you use them?
9. Have you ever been asked to leave a shopping centre? Is so, what was the reason given to you and how did you respond?
10. Are there particular areas in the shopping centres that you use more regularly? Why?
11. Have you ever been involved in any youth activity based at the shopping centres? Explain.
12. Are there other facilities that you think could be based at the shopping centres that young people would use?
13. Other issues?

Youth services

1. Is public space an issue of concern to young people and youth services in your area? If so, what are the major issues?
2. What public space areas are most commonly used by young people and are there trends in relation to the time of day, days of week and particular groups of young people that use these spaces?
3. Does conflict exist in young people's use of public space? Is so what is the nature of the conflict?
4. How is this conflict being addressed? What involvement do youth services have in addressing the conflict? If a specific project is operating, please outline the background, process, outcomes and involvement of young people in the project.
5. Do local youth services work with other organisations? If so how, and if not, why?
6. What strategies can you identify that are essential to working with young people on this issue?
7. What is the most effective way to consult with young people on this project?

Council staff

1. Has there been a trend in this local government area towards an increase in the privatisation of public spaces?
2. Does your council receive complaints about young people's use of public space? If so, what spaces and who's complaining?

3. What involvement does Council have on in-house and non Council committees related to the needs of young people?
4. Has Council ever researched the needs of young people in relation to the planning of public spaces and facilities?
5. How do you as a service think young people's needs should be addressed regarding public space issues?
6. What barriers can you identify to improving the access of young people to the planning processes used by Council?
7. What other organisations does Council work with in regards to the needs of young people?
8. Would a planning guide that considers the needs of young people in public spaces be of assistance to Council planners?
9. Are there other areas where Council needs additional support and resources in order to adequately address the needs of young people?
10. Are there any other issues you would like to mention?

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'No Standing: Young People and Community Space Project Research Report' is the result of a six month research project by the Youth Action and Policy Association NSW Inc. This report outlines the findings from consultations with key stakeholders on the use of community spaces by young people with a focus on shopping centres in New South Wales.

Recommendations have been developed that focus on the opportunities for changes to the planning and management of community spaces as well as the importance of public education campaigns and professional development programs to improve the working relationships between stakeholders.

"'No Standing' challenges the negative stereotypes surrounding young people and offers an alternative approach. This report highlights the reality of the changing nature of employment and education and the inadequate services and facilities available to young people."

Loren Poizot, Youth Action and Policy Association NSW

"The historical approach to young people's use of community space is at best viewed as passive tolerance. This report encourages both leadership and innovation to ensure the role, function and contribution by youth to our community is valued as an investment in our collective futures."

Peter Quinlivan, Harbourside Shopping Centre, Darling Harbour

yapa

THE CABINET OFFICE
NEW SOUTH WALES

YAPA: assisting young people in NSW to achieve a more equitable social status in terms of government actions and decisions and access to social resources